

## HUMOUR IN OUR STREETS

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"HUMOUR IN THE THEATRE"  
"HUMOUR IN SPORTS"  
"HUMOUR AMONG THE CLERGY"  
ETC.

LONDON  
UNIVERSAL PUBLICATIONS LTD.,  
CHICHESTER HOUSE, CHANCERY LANE, W.C.2

*O grey, O gloomy skies ! What then ?  
Here is a marvellous race of men ;  
More wonderful than Rome was, when  
The world was Rome !*

*See the great stream of life flow by !  
Here thronging myriads laugh and sigh,  
Here rise and fall, here live and die  
In this vast home.*

LIONEL JOHNSON.

## PREFACE

By IAN HAY

ANECDOTES are the small change of History, but let us not despise them on that account. The threepenny bit is held in no great esteem (outside Scotland), but make a heap of threepenny bits and you have a bank balance.

Similarly, an anthology of personal observations and first-hand experiences in a particular sphere—Parliament, the Theatre, the Services, and the like—judiciously selected and blended, assumes the collective importance of a family archive.

That is why I welcome these volumes, more especially since their ingredients have been drawn from such authentic and readable sources. You may tackle them in two ways: either you may swallow them whole for instruction or peck at them delicately for entertainment; but in either case your reputation as a *raconteur* will be materially increased.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

BY JOHN AYE

IN the compilation of this book I have ransacked every available source. It would be difficult to give a complete list of all the authorities from whom I have drawn, but mention should be made of the following works placed under contribution in so large a measure for what I hope may become a standard work on the humour of London life

*London's Government* by Elsie Sea, *The Antiquities of the City* by Fay Kingham, *London's Loafers* by A. Baker, *The City Police* by Watts E. Dun, *Homes and Homesteads* by Rufus Quick, *London Schools and Schoolmasters* by Hall Caine, *Travelling by Tube* by Miles Standing, *London's Traffic* by L. C. Carr, *City Laundries* by Dryden Aird, *Humours of Traffic* by Whimsical Walker, *London's Cinemas* by Andrew Hall, *Rogues of Old London* by Ann Dover, *London's Mayors* by A. Steed, *Crime and Punishment* by A. Beak, *Stockbrokers and Hawkers* by I. Sellem, and *Have this one with me!* by John Aye

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## CHAPTER I

### LONDON IN GENERAL

OF all the countless tributes paid to London, none is so emphatic, and yet so true, as that of Doctor Johnson: "When a man is tired of London he is tired of life, for there is in London all that life can afford."

London, in every respect a city of contrasts, is the playground of the rich, the workshop of the poor. A city of the past, present and future. It is the cradle of a nation, insular and proud, and yet within its confines there are gathered representatives of all people that on earth do dwell. On the one hand it is the grand arena in which is carried on the daily and bitter struggle for bread, on the other, it offers such free entertainment as can be found in no other city. Interesting sights are always to be seen, the strange is ever taking place, and humour is never absent from its grey old streets, while all the time Life's drama continues with incidents as exciting and as thrilling as any on the theatre's stage. Therein lies the call of London, a call world-wide, the memory of which will bring to a man in the centre of Africa the roar of London's traffic



and the distinctive smell of her streets To those who know and love their London it is a call insistent "It calls in the middle of our work, it calls at odd moments like the fever of spring that stirs each year in the blood. It seems to offer romantically, not streets paved with gold, but streets filled with leisure, streets where we shall saunter, things for the eye to rest on in a grey and glamorous light, books to read, men to be idle with, women to love"

London and its suburbs is a huge agglomeration of streets and roads, with, here and there, an avenue, a crescent, a lane or row We turn to the dictionary and discover "road" defined as "a broad open way to be travelled over", 'a public passage', while a street is said to be 'a public way in a town or city with houses commonly on both sides'

In London it would seem as if we had adhered to these definitions, our great trade thoroughfares are usually denominated streets, except in such instances as the Edgware Road, Mile End Road, etc, where businesses have sprung up on what was once only a high road

It is when we go further afield, into the more or less residential quarters, that we find the term 'road' takes on an aristocratic significance, while "street" becomes democratic, and as we plunge deeper and deeper into Suburbia the difference becomes more and more strongly

marked. Where the houses are semi-detached and have railings and a small garden in the front it is usually denominated a road, but where there is no such semi-detachment, and no railings to guard exclusiveness and gentility, then the thoroughfare becomes only a street, and is consequently looked down upon by its more aristocratic neighbours.

But as the houses in roads look down on those in streets as belonging to "the lower classes", so they in turn look down on those in rows and alleys with ineffable contempt, and both unite in scorn for avenues and crescents, for these are but mere modern upstarts and *nouveaux riches*.

London, as everyone knows, is the capital of England, and of the towns of the United Kingdom, ranks only second in importance to Manchester. Or such is Manchester's report. It has a population of 5,193,874 or thereabouts, of which a few are English, while the remainder consists of Scotch, Jewish and Welsh settlers, nigger jazz bands and Lancashire comedians. The Scotch and Jews were amongst the early arrivals; the Welsh are a comparatively recent introduction who only flowed in after Wales was discovered by Lloyd George.

Its geographical position, according to *Punch*, begins on the north soon after the Midlands and on the south soon after the sea. On the west it reaches to the source of the Thames,

and on the East it has never been explored, but is popularly supposed to be in the hands of the Chinese

The metropolis itself may be divided into two great portions, London above ground and London underground. The two principal features of the latter are the Tubes and the underground tea-rooms. The tubes, although it has not been generally recognised, have been the greatest agency of feminine progress, and they are still a central feature in the life of our womanhood. The suburban tube station, like an oasis in the desert, provides an avenue of escape from the dullness of the suburbs into the fair land of fashion and frivolity. Within half an hour of leaving *Balmoral* or *Mon Repos* the placid delights of the suburban sewing circle can be exchanged for the thrills of a breathless struggle at a West End bargain counter.

The underground tea-rooms with which the city is honeycombed are the resort of the tired and jaded business man, into which he burrows when the strain of the daily struggle becomes overwhelming. There, in an atmosphere of cretonne, art shades, and subdued artificial light he recruits his wearied brain with cups of tea and coffee, or revives his flagging energies by gentle dalliance with the fair attendants. As a rule these harbours of refuge have oriental names such as the *Mocha*, the *Geisha*, the *Divan*,

and, to make them more or less sacred to regular customers, generally have entrances difficult to discover except by the initiated. The attendant houris usually display a suburban-bred baughtiness very much out of accord with their Eastern pose, and their faces normally wear an air of gloom as if momentarily they were expecting the arrival of the funeral cortège.

Its statues are a prominent feature of the London scene; to make certain whether or not a figure is a statue, short-sighted visitors should throw a stone at it—it might be a bricklayer in repose. As part of the current movement to obtain a Brighter London, it has been suggested that some of the existing statues might be replaced by those of persons more in the public eye. If this idea ever comes to fruition we may yet see King Charles I replaced by Charlie Chaplin, Richard Cœur de Lion by Douglas Fairbanks, Oliver Cromwell by George Lansbury, Boadicea by Miss Pankhurst, while Nelson's Column could admirably serve for some famous dancer or some Chancellor of the Exchequer hazardous enough to reduce the Income Tax.

A statue which visitors should not miss is that of Boadicea, situated on the Embankment. Boadicea was the first British suffragette. When she became embroiled with the authorities and insisted on her determination to stick up

for her rights, the necessary stick business, in the shape of a little useful correction, was done by the Romans. Upon being released at the expiration of her sentence she drove round the country in her private car delivering a course of lectures on "Woman's rights in general and my own in particular." She raised an army, composed principally of Druids, Buffaloes, the Ancient Order of Foresters and men from the Labour Exchanges, but it was soon defeated, and Boadicea, to avoid the necessity of having to roam or go to Rome, took poison.

Though much mud, literally and figuratively, has been cast upon our London statues, it would seem that they have in many cases been the work of either sly or unconscious humorists. Thus, in the memorial outside the Royal Exchange to the men of London who fought in the Great War, one soldier is depicted with his hands closed one above the other over the muzzle of his rifle, a position that would ensure him at least ten days' C.B. Again, though History does not record that the famous Duke of Wellington was a trick rider, in Chantrey's statue he is portrayed apparently in stockings without boots or spurs while his horse is without that very necessary article to most riders a saddle girth. Humour also appears in the Belgian Monument, on which a youth is shown going forth to battle in

Nature's own attire, a kit that would have been somewhat cold during a winter on the Western Front. Lastly, among the impedimenta on the Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner, is a rum jar, bearing the mystic symbol S R D. On the authority of Mr C G Harper, in his *A Londoner's Own London* who got the information from a policeman, we are able to state that this means, "Seldom reaches destination."

London also shrines the Houses of Parliament, built beside the River Thames in order that M P s might have a picturesque setting when giving teas to their lady constituents. They contain many handsome tea and lunch rooms and two good bars. Two so called legislative chambers are attached, primarily for the edification of sightseers, that of the Lords is little used, while that of the Commons serves on occasions as a boxing saloon. The bulk of legislation is not now done at the Houses of Parliament, but at the offices of our newspapers the political clubs, and some mysterious place known as 'the little house round the corner'.

Many other buildings of some fame are kept in repair for the entertainment of country and colonial visitors. The list includes the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, both of which the average Londoner visits once only—when he is taken as a small boy—and doesn't go there again, though he insists upon all his

visitors doing so, regretting that business prevents him from accompanying them.

The city possesses also a large number of museums and picture galleries, for some strange reason always classed in guide books either under the head of "Places of Interest" or "Amusements". One well-known book on London has even gone so far as to include them under "London at Play". They are much frequented by American tourists engaged in seeing London in a day, their general practice being to come to the entrance, buy a picture post card, exclaim "Gee, some place", and then dash off by motor coach to view the next item of interest on their list. The dark interiors of these museums make an admirable meeting place for lovers, who for some reason or other do not wish to be seen together in public, the only disturbing element to these love trysts being an occasional student—usually short-sighted—and, at other rare intervals,—an attendant taking a walk to keep himself awake. A courtship under these circumstances is really a good test of affection; the couple who can remain at fever heat in the presence of a dozen mummies should sail through the troubled sea of matrimony with little difficulty.

To those with the hardihood to make a round of these galleries and museums, the reading room of the British Museum is a place that should not be missed. This is inhabited

by a quaint race, commonly reputed to belong to the Somno-soporific period, whose outstanding characteristics are a general air of mustiness and a dislike to daylight. They are usually put outside at night, but the place where they sleep is known to no man.

For the benefit of those who propose to make a round of London's show places it is well to know beforehand what is the correct thing to say at each of them. After spending many hours at each, listening to the comments made by visitors, the following short list has been drawn up and may be found useful:

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| The National Gallery     | "We can't spend more than ten minutes here."                   |
| The Tower                | "It has a tragic fascination, hasn't it?"                      |
| The Houses of Parliament | "I wonder where our member sits!"                              |
| The British Museum       | "We'll look at one or two rooms and then make for Harridge's." |
| Westminster Abbey        | "It's like unfolding the pages of history!"                    |
| St. Paul's               | "Have you read Harrison Ainsworth?"                            |
| Madame Tussaud's         | "You'd almost think they were alive!"                          |
| The Zoo                  | "Oh, isn't he like Uncle George?"                              |
| The Albert Memorial      | "Where's the nearest restaurant (or pub)?"                     |



London's railway termini are all placed as far apart as possible, either with the object of swelling the revenue of the taxi cab companies or of keeping people once they have set foot in the city. Such precaution is unnecessary in the case of the Scots. Each terminus has its distinguishing characteristics and an individuality. According to one authority Charing Cross is youthful and restless while St. Pancras is sedate and middle aged, Paddington is rich and complacent, Marylebone middle class and inclined to be anxious, while Liverpool Street is bourgeoisie and fretful, Waterloo carries an air of cheery optimism, Victoria one of honeymoons, while Cannon Street and Euston give the impression that the train containing the corpse is expected at any moment. It will be noted that no mention is made of Fenchurch Street, the writer could probably find no words in his vocabulary that would adequately describe it.

The suburbs form a huge ring round London and are the places from which the people in the city come. No one knows where the suburbs begin or where they end. Great care should always be exercised by any new comer before describing a locality as a suburb, whereas some districts such as Camden Town or Stratford would be flattered others, like Richmond and Kew, would arise in wrath and expel the unfortunate stranger from their midst.

Strange to say, although eighty per cent of the people working in London live in the suburbs, these unfortunate localities are always spoken of by writers with contempt. The supreme insult that can be levelled at an idea or a person is "How suburban." The ladies are largely to blame for this, a woman who admits that she bought a frock anywhere other than the West End is looked upon by her sisters as a social outcast.

The architecture of the suburbs varies in character from early Victorian to post war Woolworth or Georgian-Elizabethan, according to *Punch*, it must be seen to be believed and dynamited to be forgotten. It may be best studied in chapels, pubs and petrol refilling stations.

Imitateness is the outstanding characteristic of the suburb, it follows the craze of the moment—as determined by the daily Press—whether this be health exercises, hiking, the cultivation of sweet peas or community singing, with little regard to their applicability to that particular locality. Speaking generally the whole life of a London suburb is a fitter subject for community wailing than for community song.

The city, together with a large part of its suburbs, is governed by the larger newspapers, with occasional help from the London County Council and the police. There is also a Lord

Mayor, but his primary functions are to initiate relief funds, to preside at meetings or the laying of foundations stones, and once a year to give entertainment to jaded Londoners by means of a circus procession. He also gives entertainment, including board and lodging, when he acts in his magisterial capacity.

It is often said by old stagers that London is not such a jolly place as it used to be, but a modern youth writing to *Punch* suggests that it never was. According to Pett Ridge, perhaps the greatest authority on London life, the city is the jolliest part of London. "We may," he says, "have taken our pleasures sadly but we take our business gaily. I suspect that this was always so and that the heart of Merrie England never lay very far from Bow Bells. . . . Of course the City man is quite unaware of this. That is why his gaiety is so real and spontaneous. He imagines that his days in the City form a long round of toil to which only a strong sense of duty can compel him. In this lies the advantage of going to business. Whereas the artist or the writer has to do his work at home, under the all-seeing eye of his wife, the business man goes forth secure in the knowledge that he can read his daily paper in comfort in his office, can have that game of cards in the train, or alternatively can flirt with some pretty typist, can have a long chat with Brown on that last game of golf, and finally can seek

the quiet seclusion of some Mecca or Mikado for an afternoon quiet hour of retirement "

The Londoner, as a rule, possesses both humour and good humour and this is especially so in the East End. The humour of the Cockney stands in a class by itself and its principal characteristics are its prompt delivery, its pertinence and its impertinence. It is rapier like in its quickness of thrust and impish in its impertinence. But even in his 'cheek' the Cockney's good humour is predominant. It is a rich vein of gold, even where it runs through much that is dross, and it shows him in the rôle of a great rollicking baby. It is in his yearly beano, or in the saturnalia of Hampstead Heath, that this can best be observed, and it must be seen to be believed.

The staple industry of London is work—except for plumbers, bricklayers and civil servants who form the thinking as distinct from the working classes. Although more or less keen on work, the average Londoner is fond of manly sports, and usually plays dominoes or darts with a fair amount of skill. Walking is not much indulged in except when he is in a hurry. He obtains all the exercise he requires by taxi dodging, strap hanging and sprinting down the long approaches to the Tube stations. His principal recreation is the collection of coins—George V period—and the establishment of societies for every known and unknown

purpose. A favourite form of amusement among the leisured classes (the aristocratic and the dolt-drawers), is that of attending the police or Law Courts in the hope of striking a "spicy" case. Torture has now been abolished from our legal procedure, with the exception of cross-examination in the witness-box; it still exists, however, among our social customs in the form of lectures and after-dinner speeches.

London possesses two great societies for the discovery of hidden treasure. These are continually causing huge caverns and trench systems to be dug in the main streets, which, in order to shield their doings from curious on-lookers, they cover up with huge tarpaulins bearing either the mystic symbols L.C.C. or G.P.O. Given one of these mysterious cloaks it is possible for anyone so inclined to follow undisturbed the almost forgotten pastime of digging for coal in any of the great thoroughfares of the metropolis.

London has always been a happy hunting ground for the novelist, since it is such a good place to study character—the reason being because so many have been lost there. It is a surprising fact, but borne out by a study of the books written for children, that while the good little boy who comes to London always succeeds, and often becomes Lord Mayor, the bad little boy is always found out and finishes in prison. The respective chances of the bad

boy in London and in the provinces are as ten to one. This success of the good little boy may account for the high moral tone to be found on the Stock Exchange.

Surprising as it may sound, good fishing is to be obtained in the heart of London. Limpets and other shell fish may be found in plenty in Whitehall. Cod flourishes in the neighbourhood of the Stock Exchange. Flat fish abound in the West End. The carp or grouser appears to frequent the neighbourhood of the railway stations, while the (h)erring may always be found in large numbers at Bow Street or Vine Street.

London's foreign element is to be found largely in the East End and Soho. The latter place was in ancient days a game preserve and was frequently hunted, indeed it derives its name from the old cry of the chase—"So—hoe." Anyone who has stayed in a Soho hotel will agree that in one respect it is still a game preserve, and though it is yet frequently used as a hunting ground, the old-time cry has been replaced by a police whistle. The East End is full of strange people. After an hour or two in the neighbourhood of Commercial Road the visitor will wonder whether he has dropped in upon the Tower of Babel. Visit Whitechapel and you will sing with the Psalmist, "When Israel came out of Egypt." Stepney has been called the Kingdom of Poland, while in Penny-

fields you can imagine yourself in the slums of Hong Kong.

The power of London to absorb within itself so many foreign elements is really marvellous. In one generation the German will shed his accent and the superfluous syllables of his name, the Frenchman will become what he himself describes as a real "Jean Boeuf", while in the same time the Jew will have become a full-blown Scotsman.

With such a varied population many languages are spoken including Yiddish, Scotch, Cockney and suburban English. The last named is perhaps the least understandable and the most difficult to master, seeing that to speak it with fluency requires at least five years' acquaintance with suburban drawing-rooms.

London possesses many clubs which may be graded as dull, duller and dullest. Under the first heading come those established for mutual improvement and for the uplifting of the masses; in the second those devoted to rest such as the Athenæum and the Service clubs, and in the last the night clubs. These last serve a great moral purpose as youth flocks to them under the impression that it is seeing the very latest in what is naughty, and finding them boring is only too glad to return to the more hectic delights of whist drives and cinemas. Once clubs were looked upon as destroyers of home life and men only went

to them in a shame-faced fashion after informing their wives that they would be kept late on business. With the emancipation of women, however, a change has come over the scene, and now in order that their own programme should not be interrupted husbands are ordered by their wives to go to the club and in no circumstances to return before dinner.

The metropolis has sometimes been called the city of Dreadful Noise, but this is incorrect; a Sunday afternoon spent in it will give the visitor an impression of slumbering greatness that can only be equalled by a visit to Pompeii or an afternoon call at one of the government offices in Whitehall.



## CHAPTER II

### HOUSE AND STREET NAMES

THE reproach, so often levelled, that England is a nation without humour requires no further contradiction than is to be found in the naming of our houses and streets

To anyone who has studied the subject it would almost seem that this naming has been carried out by some imp with a strongly sarcastic vein "The names of many streets," writes one author, "have been chosen on the same *lucus a non lucendo* principle as that which determines some suburban residents to affix to their villas titles which have either no meaning at all as house names, or no reference whatever to any perceptible characteristics, moral or physical, of their respective dwellings" Illustrative of this how often do we find some small villa with (see house agents' lists), "two reecp, three bed, bath li & c, domestic offices," figuring under the high sounding name of *Balmoral* or *Sandringham*, while *The Firs* seems to take its name from the fact that it is in more or less proximity to one attenuated plane tree? What, also, can be more misleading than the name *Mon Repos*, so given

apparently because the house lies on a busy tram and bus route, and is flanked on either side by a laundry and a boys' school and backs on to a boiler factory?

In the naming of suburban villas there apparently exist three more or less abnormal schools of thought. The first, by much the most numerous, shows itself in the giving of high-sounding names,—probably a pathetic example of making the best of the jerry-builder's efforts,—and in it a villa, fronting on a dull arterial road and backing on to a wilderness of brick and mortar, becomes *Windermere* or *Killarney*, while one of the band-box variety blossoms forth as *Chatsworth* or *Arundel*. To the second, to which we might give the name of the connubial, belong the newly-married and others who usually attempt to place on record their wonderful and complete unanimity. Thus, entering on their new abode, Fred and Ellen combine to call their villa *Fredellen*, ignoring the fact that they have failed to follow the old rule of "Ladies First"; in other instances the place at which the honeymoon was spent is perpetuated, and *Lucerne* proudly looks out,—not on a glorious view of snowy Alpine peaks and deep blue water,—but on a builder's yard and the shop of a second-hand clothes' dealer. Lastly, in the third class, comes the alleged humorist, who, devoid of all proper feeling and lost to a sense of fitness

christens his home *The Bird's Nest*, *Kosikot*, *Cumin Cottage*, *Why House?*, *Owern Est*, reaching the height of imbecility in *Damnit Hall* and *Mynsabeare*.

With the nomenclature of London streets we find ourselves in a world that caters for every taste and every kind of individual. Almost the first point to attract notice is the strong religious element that prevails. Altogether there are about seventy saints recognised by the Church of England, and in London alone forty-eight are represented in our street-names. Moreover, if this does not suffice for the ardent churchman, he can direct his steps towards Godliman Street, Goode Street, Evangelist Street, Paradise Street, Sermon Lane, Tabernacle Street, Christian Street, Crucifix Lane, Creed Lane, Angel Alley, Noble Street, Dean Street and the Temple.

To those brought up in the country, and to whom rural scenes still appeal, there are many roads and streets whose names must strongly take the fancy as likely to furnish residences of rural character. Among these are Violet Hill, Appletree Yard, Maypole Alley, Cherry Tree Court, Pear Tree Court, Acorn Wharf, Beehive Cottages, Oat Lane, Pea Hen Court and Camomile Street, but on the other hand Garlic Hill will not appeal to many, nor, in spite of its name, will Rose Court, since its principal building is a chandler's shop.

It might be pointed out that the chief street in London is naturally Boss Street, the one of least importance Nil Street, the most gloomy is Moody Street, the most winding Twining Street or Turnagain Lane, the most noxious Addle Street, the neatest Trim Street, the oldest First Street or Adam Street, the shortest Shorter Street, while the only one that would appear to fill a dual role is Street Avenue.

It is a great pity that the present names of various roads and streets do not correspond more nearly with the avocations and the character of the people who inhabit them, and in the hope of effecting an improvement in this respect we attach a rough guide for the use of those about to move.

The Aristocrat	. Quality Court.
The Toper .	. Bacchus Walk, Beer Lane, Shandy Street, Watney Street, but not Temperance Yard.
The Actor .	. Playhouse Yard.
The Aged .	. Pater Street, Senior Street, Slip- pers Place, Bury Street, Harp Alley.
The Golfer .	. Loftie Street.
The Anglo-Indian .	. Currie Street.
The Lawyer .	. Law Street and Justice Walk.
The Coward .	. Craven Road.
The Bad Lot .	. Crooked Lane, Sly Street, Pinchin Street, Beak Street, Clink Street.
The Gossip .	. Clack Street, Gasholder Place.

The Navy . . .	Naval Row, Anchor Alley
The Traveller . .	Ocean Street, Orb Street
The Soldier . . .	Gun Square, Cannon Street, Artillery Street, Gunpowder Alley, Occupation Road, Rifle Street, Sergeant's Inn, Fort Street, taking care to avoid Retreat Place
The Seeker after Health	Amwell Street, Coldbath Square, Doughty Street, Blythe Road, Buck Street
The Dickens Lover	Copperfield Road, Dora Street
The Teetotaller	Water Lane, Well Street, Camomile Street, Milk Street
The Sportsman	Angler's Lane, Ball Alley, Gee Street
The Schoolboy	Child's Place, Child's Street, Candy Street, Callow Street, Lark Row, Bear Gardens, Birchm Lane
The Gastronome	Herring Street, Three Herring Court, Pickle Herring Street, Pepper Street, the Poultry, Pudding Lane, Rabbit Row, Bacon Street
The Lazy One . .	Cushion Court (almost entirely confined to stockbrokers), Plumber's Row

A large number of London streets still retain in their name some association with the trade formerly carried on there. Thus Bread Street marks the quarter assigned to the bakers in *olden times for the disposal* of their wares. Budge Row takes its name

from the dealers in budge, this being a kind of fine lamb's skin much used for the edging of scholastic gowns. More difficult to identify is Fetter Lane, once the home of the felters or makers of felt, while Sermon Lane is an abbreviation of Sheremonier Lane, a shermoneyer being a tradesman who used to shear or clip bullion into shape for coining. Tokenhouse Yard also is connected with our coinage and recalls the time when the lowest coin was the silver penny, about the size of a modern threepenny bit, and this was marked into halves and fourths (farthings) by cuts penetrating half way through the coin. To supplement this small change tokens were issued by various tradesmen, and these could be exchanged for current coin of the realm at the Tokenhouse, an office which subsequently gave its name to the Yard.

Other names more or less easy of identification with particular trades are Fish Street and Friday Street, the one time centre of activity of the retail fishmongers, Cursitor Street, from a class of legal officers called cursitors, who prepared and issued writs on behalf of the Court of Chancery, Paternoster Row, where congregated the makers of rosaries or, as they were then called, paternosters, Glasshouse Yard, marking the old centre of the Venetian glass manufacture, and at one time largely occupied by workmen from that city, Lime Street, mentioned in documents

of the twelfth century as the home of a lime burner, Garlick Hill, where in early times there existed a market at which this commodity was largely sold, Ironmonger Lane, the home of that trade as early as the reign of Edward I, the Poultry, mentioned in the fourteenth century as the Poulterers' market, Carter Lane, known in 1295 as Carter Strete, where, according to Stow, the London historian of the days of Elizabeth, carmen or carters had their stables, Cornhill, a name which can be traced back to A D 1100, and marks the old time corn market for the city, Trump Street, denoting the locality of the one-time trade of trumppers or trumpet makers, and Coleman Street, one of the oldest streets in London, and probably once occupied by charcoal burners or coalmen

Not quite so easily identified are Pudding Lane, which refers to the days when the butchers of Eastcheap established there a scalding house for pigs, and "their puddings (an old time word for entrails) with other filth of beasts are voided down that way to their dung boats on the Thames", Cannon Street, or in its earliest form Candlewithe Street, the street of the candle-makers, which has come down to us through the forms Candlewick, Canwick, Cannick, Canning, to Cannon, Staining Lane, once the abode of the painter stainers or painters on cloth, Panyer Alley, or the home of the makers of panyers or bread baskets, Lothbury, a cor-

ruption of Lattenbury, or the place of the founders of copper or laton work, or, according to another authority, so called from the loathsome noise made by their lathes, Billiter Street, where at one time the bell founders or bell jetours carried on their trade, Mark Lane, probably derived from the Old English marte, an ox or cow, and at one time doubtless marking the site of slaughterhouses, and Lombard Street, the place of settlement of the Lombards who came over to England in the reign of Edward II, after the expulsion of the Jews, and settled here as moneylenders and goldsmiths. Cheapside, which at one time was the centre of trade of mediaeval London, and might be looked upon as its High Street, derives its name from the old English word cheep, signifying a market, and marks the site of what was once the business centre of the City. Threadneedle Street shows a connection with the three needles that appear in the arms of the Needlemakers' Company, Fenchurch Street, from the Anglo-French word fein-hay, marks the site of an old hay market, Cloth Street is a relic of the ancient and famous Cloth Fair of Smithfield, Seacole Lane, the landing place of barges coming up the Fleet River with "sea coal", this form of fuel being always brought by water from the ports on the Northumbrian and Durham coast, Distaff Lane, probably connected with the spinning trade, and Galley Dock, at which



place the galleys from the Mediterranean ports discharged their cargoes of wine and eastern goods.

The nomenclature of other streets takes us back with a rush to those far-off days when our great city was only what would now be considered little more than a small country town in size. Moorfields recalls the time when the whole of this area was a marsh, commonly known as the moor, and used by the citizens for archery, hunting and other sports. Smithfield, also, was an open plain on which tournaments were held, and, at a later date, earned notoriety as the place of burning of any whose religious opinions failed to coincide with those of the party in power, the heretic of one reign being the saint of the next and vice versa. Vine Street at one time was cultivated as a vineyard. Wormwood Street derives its name from the herb which was largely grown there for medicinal purposes. In the same way Camomile Street perpetuates the fields of camomile that once existed in the neighbourhood, and Swedeland Court the fact that swede turnips, when introduced from Sweden, were probably first cultivated here. Jewin Street marks the site of a piece of waste ground at one time covered with rubbish and said to have been given to the Jews as a burying ground early in the thirteenth century. Houndsditch, or the ditch outside the city walls, was another

rubbish depository, and, according to Stow, was, even in his day, a dumping ground for "dead dogges" Goodman's Yard was once the centre of a farm, known after the proprietor as Goodman's Fields, the owner of which turned many an honest penny by selling milk to thirsty country rambles from the town, while Brick Hill Lane, off Upper Thames Street, recalls the time when this locality was a mound of clay suitable for bricks, so suitable indeed that in the course of time every particle of it has been removed

Other streets recall at once those distant days when various religious orders formed a large part of the community and when their varied garbs added variety and colour to the mediaeval thoroughfares. Prominent among these are Blackfriars which commemorate the Dominican or Black Friars monastery that dated from 1276 Austin Friars, the site of the Augustinian monastery founded here in 1253, Cartbusian Street, perpetuating the monastery of the monks of that order, Carmelite Street once the home of the White Friars of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel Crutched Friars from the monastery of the Friars of the Holy Cross near Tower Hill, founded in 1298, and who derived their name of Crotched or Crossed Friars from the fact that they wore a red cross both on the back and front of their gowns the Minories from the nuns or minoresses of the Franciscan Order of

St. Clair, who had a house there, and Mincing Lane from the nuns or "minchins" of St. Helens' in Bishopsgate, who at one time owned all the houses here. Also, more remote but still ecclesiastical in origin, is Bishopsgate, named after Bishop Erkenwald, son of Offa, King of Mercia, A.D. 675; Poppin's Court from the fact that at one time it contained a house called "Le Popyngaye", belonging to Cirencester Abbey, the crest of that abbey being a popinjay; Creechurch Lane, a corruption of Christchurch, the word Christ being at one time pronounced Chreest; Bolt in Tun Yard, this name being taken from the well-known rebus on Prior Bolton of St. Bartholomew the Great, where a bolt is shown passing through a tun, and Bevis Marks, once the property of the Abbots of Bury in Suffolk, and therefore called Bury's Marks or Marches.

Other street-names bring us closely into touch with the ancient history of the City. Alderman-bury, or the home of the Aldermen, reminding us of the time when the Court or Bury of Aldermen was held in this street and constituted the first Guildhall. Other names redolent of antiquity are Old Jewry which, prior to the expulsion of the Jews by Edward I in 1290, formed the original Ghetto of London; Basinghall Street, which took its name from the existence there of the hall of the Basings, a family "of great antiquity and renown";

and Giltspur Street, recalling the days when knights wore golden spurs and rode forth to Smithfield to do battle joyously for the fame of some "ladye fayre". Following on these come Bear Lane, probably connected with "bere-warde" or bearkeeper, and suggesting that the old-time cruel but popular pastime of bear-baiting was carried on there; Aldgate or Allegate, the gate for all, or the main entrance to the city; the Barbican or burk beacon, recalling the watch tower on the walls from which the leaping flames gave timely notice of any hostile approach; Ludgate or Lydgate, probably at one time only a postern or lych-gate; Holborn, originally Hole Bourne, a brook which formed part of the Fleet River; Bunhill, or more correctly, Bonehill Fields, so-called because in 1549 over a thousand cartloads of bones were removed here from the Charnel House of Old St. Paul's; Petticoat Lane, which started life as the petit court lane—the little sbort lane; and Bucklesbury, for a long time the home of the grocers of London, from Andrew Bokerel of the Italian family of Boccherelli, who was mayor from 1231 to 1236.

Like individuals, at any rate so far as concerns nomenclature, some streets have gone up in life, while others have come down. Thus the old-time Duck Lane now appears in the more aristocratic guise of Duke Street, Dirty Street has been transformed into Abingdon Street,

Knave's Acre has become respectable and changed into Poulteney Street, Pedlar's Acre has become Belvedere Road, Frying Pan Alley is now St Alban's Court, while Stinking Lane, with what might almost be called *lèse majesté* has become King Edward Street

On the other hand a decline in status is shown in Strype's Court which has deteriorated to Tripe Court, Desmond Place has now become Deadman's Place, Guthurn's Lane is dragged down to Gutter Lane, Adling or Aetheling Street (the nobleman's street) to Addle Street, and Saint Olav Street corrupted to Tooley Street

In two cases, also, streets have had a one time none too savoury reputation perpetuated in their names Thus Love Lane, between Wood Street and Aldermanbury, received its title, according to Stow, in consequence of the girls ("wantons") who once frequented it, while Stew Lane was so called because it led to Stew Quay, the embarking place for ladies of doubtful virtue crossing to the Stews or brothels on the south side of the river

Many districts outside the city present features of interest in their names Thus Chelsea is a combination of chesel and eye, the word chesel meaning pebble, as shown in the well known Chesil Beach near Portland, and until the Embankment was built Chelsea beach was covered with small stones left by the receding tides Stockwell and Clerkenwell both derive

their names from wells once existing in the locality, that in Clerkenwell being situated not far from the west end of the church, and so named because the parish clerks of London used to gather there each year to perform their miracle plays, for which, at that time, the company was famous Bayswater owes its name indirectly to water, in consequence of Baynard, who built Baynard's Castle in Upper Thames Street, and who obtained a grant of land in this locality where "there were some pleasant and plentiful springs . . . to which the name of Baynard's water was given".

Other localities take their names from old time proprietors Bethnal Green derives its present title from the family of the Bethons who held the land in the reign of Edward I. Bermondsey derives from the name of Bearmund the Saxon lord of the district and eye, an island or spot near a river, a word that survives to-day as *eyot*, while Bloomsbury is a corruption of Blemundsbury, again from the name of lords of the manor. Shoreditch commemorates not, as is commonly thought, the beautiful but unfortunate Jane Shore, but Sir John Sordich, who held the manor in 1399, while Vauxhall has undergone some transformation in spelling since it denoted the lordship of Fulk de Breutél, a member of the court of King John.

Among other streets and localities whose names are of more than passing interest might

be mentioned Goswell Street from an old well called Godewell, i.e., good well; Limehouse from the number of lime trees that at one time flourished there; Rotten Row, a corruption of *route de roi*, the King's Road, Scotland Yard, because originally a castle was built there for the reception of the Kings of Scotland when they came to do homage, and Wapping, derived from the term "wapp", the rope with which a ship's shrouds are made tight

Unfortunately, in one respect, the march of progress has swept away most of the old-time courts and alleys of the city and with them have gone many quaint old names whose disappearance is to be deplored. Among these are the following, which, though quaint in themselves, might not look well on the business note-paper of some up-to-date firm

Rag and Bone Alley  
Sweet Apple Court  
Wildgoose Alley  
Bandy Leg Alley  
Eunuch Court  
Five Inkhorn Court  
Hairbrained Court  
Blowbladder Street  
Broomstick Alley  
Halfpenny Alley  
Penny Barber's Alley  
Barber's Pole Alley  
Pig Court  
Pease Porridge Alley

Coffin Court  
Tobacco Roll Court  
Porridge Pot Alley  
Blue Maid Alley  
Dirty Lane  
Five Pipe Alley  
Blunderbuss Alley  
Quart Pot Alley  
Brown Bear Alley  
Smock Alley  
Chutterling Alley  
Washermaid Alley  
Naked Boy's Court

Strange to say the word "street" has never been very much used in the City. This characteristic is perpetuated in the song "The Lord Mayor's Coachman", an evergreen favourite at ward meetings and livery company gatherings, which records how John once undertook to drive his Lordship, the Mayor, from the Mansion House to Buckingham Palace without passing through a single street. He accomplished this by driving through the Poultry, Cheapside, St. Paul's, Ludgate Hill, Old Bailey, Holborn, Drury Lane, Long Acre, St. Martin's Lane, Trafalgar Square, Pall Mall and the Park.

Within the precincts of London the street has generally a better status than the road, while in the suburbs the roles are reversed and the road ranks higher than the street. As mere *nouveaux riches* avenues and crescents are quite unable to find a footing in the city, but, as we go farther out, we find them fighting for supremacy with the more old-fashioned roads. Lanes and yards are of course social outcasts and the pauper members of the family, and few persons would care to select them for an address, unless we make an exception in the case of Park Lane and St. James' Palace Yard.

Although not a place to which one would ordinarily look our church-nomenclature is not without its humour. It would appear that in olden days little attention was paid to the Scriptural injunction to let not the left hand



know what the right hand was doing since, in a large number of cases, the name of the benefactor to the church was linked up with that of the holy personage to whom the church was dedicated. Thus Saint Martin Outwich commemorates, in addition to the saint, William and John Otewich, who were founders of the church, while Saint Benet Sherehog perpetuates the memory of William Serehog, a benefactor of the twelfth century.

Among the multitude of City churches, in spite of our patriotism, there is only one dedicated to the titular saint of England, and that is Saint George's, Botolph Lane. Our places of worship have been dedicated to saints of all kinds and descriptions and from all parts of the world, but the native saint appears, with this exception, to have been entirely ignored, unless we include Saint James', Aldgate, which, like our Bible, was dedicated to "the Most High and Mighty Prince, James I", during whose reign it was built. Among those not English are Saint Andrew of Scotland, Saint Antholin, an Egyptian hermit, Saint Katherine, an Egyptian virgin, Saint Lawrence, a Spanish saint of Arragon, Saint Magnus, a Norwegian martyr, Saint Margaret, the virgin Saint of Antioch, Saint Martin, a native of Hungary, Saint Olave who also hailed from Norway, and Saint Pancras, a Phrygian nobleman who suffered martyrdom at Rome.

It would appear that in olden days the qualifications for canonization were hardly in accordance with Bible teaching since we find that Saint Martin, the Hungarian saint, whose memory is perpetuated in Saint Martin's, Ludgate, was "for his implacable hatred and much persecution of the Arians deemed worthy of sainthood". Moreover, instead of becoming the patron saint of executioners, he has been secured in a patronal capacity by such peaceful people as the saddlers.

Among the London churches whose names throw light on their early history are Saint Andrew Undershaft, the second name being a memento of the Maypole which formerly stood in Leadenhall Street and overtopped the church; Saint Margaret Patten, so-called because it was situated in the midst of the district frequented by the patten makers; Saint Martin Pomeroiy, showing a connection with some old orchards; Saint Mary Bothaw commemorating the old dock at Dowgate, the depth of which was regulated by a lock or boat-hatch known as the bot-haw, and Saint Peter le Poor, which name tells only too significantly of the poverty of the parish.

It might be noted that at least one London church is credited with a humorous story. The church in question is Saint Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street, and the legend relates that on certain nights of the year on the stroke

of midnight the Devil was wont to come out from his lair and carry off any belated wayfarer on whom he could lay hands. This finally became such a nuisance that Saint Dunstan decided to take a hand in the game, and one evening emerged from the church, armed with a pair of red-hot tongs or pincers, and seizing the Devil with them by the nose dragged him up and down the street. This he continued doing till nearly dawn, and then, growing tired of the occupation, hauled his prisoner down to the Temple, and, throwing him over the tops of the houses, plumped him among the lawyers, these being the only companions the holy saint thought fitted to associate with him.

## CHAPTER III

### SIGNS

It is much to be regretted that the use of signs, which in the old unlettered days served as marks of identification for every class of trade, has now become almost entirely restricted to public-houses, for with their passing much that was humorous and picturesque has gone from our streets.

Of the general practice only two vestiges now remain. These are the three golden balls of the pawnbroker, the arms of Lombardy, first used here by the moneylenders from that country, who in 1299 replaced the banished Jewish merchants, and the barber's pole, which reminds us that once the barber was also a surgeon, the parti-coloured mast representing the bleeding limb wrapped in its white surgical bandage.

Restricted as the use now is, the subject of signs is still a study in itself, for, as one old student of London life wrote many years ago, "Our streets are filled with blue boars, black swans, red lions, flying pigs and hogs in armour, with many other creatures more extraordinary than any to be found in the

deserts of Africa." Apparently, also, the strange combinations so found have always been a source of some amusement, as witness the following quaint rhyme from a publication called the *British Apollo*, which appeared in 1707:

"I'm amazed at the signs  
As I pass through the town,  
To see the odd mixture,  
A Magpie and Crown,  
The Whale and the Crow,  
The Razor and Hen,  
The Leg and Seven Stars,  
The Scissors and Pin,  
The Axe and the Battle,  
The Tun and the Lute,  
The Eagle and Child,  
The Shovel and Boot," etc.

Although the use of signs may be gradually dying out, the fact still remains that where they are retained the location of the house is better known than that of any other type of building. Certainly to the average Londoner such terms as the *Angel*, the *Elephant and Castle* and the *Horseshoe*, are much more familiar than any churches in the same neighbourhood. This is borne out by a well-known Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, who, speaking recently in North London, is reported as saying, "Your new London suburbs, with the houses looking all alike, are very dull and gloomy places; especially as there are no

public-houses to guide the traveller on his way. Whenever I am invited to a church I ask for the name of the nearest public-house to guide me there. . . . I love the story of Saint Paul on his visit to Rome, being met by the brethren of the Church at *The Three Taverns* just outside the city, which, I take it, was a sort of *Elephant and Castle*."

To judge from existing signs, a strong connection between the Church and the brewing trade appears always to have existed, we find in London no less than twelve saints whose memory is perpetuated on a signboard, while there are also twelve *Angels*, four *Angels and Crown*, an *Angel and Trumpet*, a *York Minster*, a *Vicar of Wakefield*, a *Bishop Bonner*, a *Simon the Tanner* and a *Baptist's Head*.

Second to the clergy in popularity are the Fighting Forces, with the Navy well ahead of the Army, the former according to the London Post Office Directory contributing nine Admirals as against the latter's four Generals, while Nelson is represented sixteen times as against Wellington's three. This is perhaps due to the fact that the sailor ashore is a better customer than the soldier, a supposition that is backed up by the fact that while there exists *The Jolly Sailors*, there is no *Jolly Soldier*. Battles on land, however, appear to have had a greater appeal than naval engagements, since to *Blenheim Alma* the

*Crimea, Gibraltar, Maida and Waterloo*, the Navy can only respond with the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*

Most professions and nearly all trades are, as might be expected, represented in the signs of London inns and a few have even earned the prefix of "jolly" These include the *Butchers*, *Coopers*, *Farmers*, *Gardeners*, *Sailors*, *Tanners*, *Watermen* and (*mirable dictu*), *Anglers*, but the sign of "The Jolly Undertakers" is not to be found A direct connection with a particular trade is shewn in the sign of the *Scissors and Pin*, evidently at one time a house of call for tailors as was the *Axe and Battle* for men-at-arms Neither would we be far wrong in surmising that lawyer's clerks were wont to foregather at the *Woolsack* or the *Black Cap*, while budding poets would resort to a house that honours their fraternity, the *Robert Burns*, and dramatists would wend their way to the *Shakespeare* or the *Ben Jonson* For the medical profession, however, there would appear to be no house of call unless they cared to frequent the *Black Boy* and *Stomach Ache* in Farringdon Street

Conviviality, of course, is the keynote of many of these names, commencing with the inviting ones of the *Ship Inn* and the *Dew Drop Inn*, while the friendship and pleasure to be found inside is portrayed in the *Cottage of Content*, the *Bank of Friendship*, the *Good Samaritan*, the *Friend at Hand* and the *Bacchus*

That a limit should be placed by the wise man upon the amount of liquor he consumes is shown in the existence of the *Final* and the *Finish*, and if this is not observed he may make acquaintance with the *World turned upside down*

A large class of inn signs owes its origin to the illiteracy of those adopting or renewing them. Thus the arms of the Talbot family have now become corrupted into the *Spotted Dog*, the *Goat and Compasses* has come down to us from the motto "God encompasses us", the *Bag of Nails* was originally the *Bacchanals*, at one time a very popular sign, while the *Bull and Mouth* is either a rendering of *Bowl and Mouth*, or, according to some authorities perpetuates Boulogne Moth where Henry VIII gained a small naval victory in 1544. The *Swan with two Necks* is a corruption of the *Swan with two Nicks*, swans so marked in the bill for the purposes of identification being kept by privilege on the Thames by the Vintners' Company. The *Goose and Gridiron*, a once famous house in St Paul's Churchyard, but now pulled down, derived its name from ribald allusion to its original sign of Apollo's lyre surmounted by a swan, this being the badge of the Musicians' Society, who at one time held their meetings there.

Turning to sport we find the *Cricketer* well represented but no house would appear to



be sacred to golf, football or bowls. Hunting and shooting finds its representatives in the *Fox and French Horn*, the *Green Man and French Horn*, and the *Dog and Duck*, this latter recalling the days when, among other districts lying outside London, Islington was a favourite place for this cruel sport.

"Ho, ho, to Islington, enough!  
Fetch Job, my son, and our dog Ruffel  
For there in pond, through mire and muck,  
We'll cry hay Duck, then Ruffe, hay Duck!"

Humorous signs form a numerous, but unfortunately decreasing class, of which the streets of our provincial towns now furnish more examples than do those of the metropolis. The most famous of these is undoubtedly *The Man Loaded with Mischief*, a sign depicting a man with a woman on his back and a magpie on one shoulder and a monkey on the other. Somewhat similar in its expressed opinion of the fair sex is the sign of the *Silent Woman*, which portrays a headless woman with her head under her arm and her mouth padlocked. A humorous sign, which is self-explanatory, is the *Labour in Vain*, showing a woman bathing a negro child, while the *Five Alls* gives a pictorial representation of a king, a bishop, a lawyer, a soldier and an agricultural labourer, these signifying respectively, I rule all, I pray for all, I plead for all, I fight for all, I pay for all.

Frequently in times past the sign has been used by the landlord as a means of obtaining revenge or of expressing some other strong feeling. One good innkeeper, who had been successful in litigation, christened his house *The Honest Lawyer*, and had the sign painted shewing a decapitated gentleman of the long robe. Another, evidently no lover of Scotland or Scottish things, gave his house the name of the *Cat and Bagpipes*, the explanation being that they made similar noises. In Portsmouth we come across a good specimen of sardonic humour in the *Jolly Taxpayer*, while London furnishes something similar in the *Rent Day*.

Sometimes, Boniface will add to the pictorial sign a few lines of verse extolling the virtues of the articles he sells. An example of this occurs at the *Mother Red Cap* in the Holloway Road, which thus advertises its goods to the world.

Old Mother Red Cap according to the tale,  
Lived twenty and a hundred years by drinking this  
good ale  
It was her meat, it was her drink and medicine  
besides  
And if she still had drunk this ale she never would  
have died

In another case where the inn was situated at the bottom of a somewhat steep hill, the invitation was worded

"When you do this hill go up  
Stop and take a cheerful cup  
When you do this hill go down  
Stop and drink your glasses round "

There are many quaint signs, in addition to the examples already given, of which, unfortunately, the history and meaning have been lost in the mists of antiquity. Among those still traceable are the *Salutation and Cat*, near St Paul's, so called from an old picture, which used to hang in the house, representing a dandy of the eighteenth century saluting a friend in the street and offering him a pinch of snuff out of a box which formed the top of his clouded cane. These box knobs were then known as "cats."

Another sign, puzzling to the uninitiated, is the *Pindar of Wakefield*. The term pindar or pinner means the keeper of a public pound, and the Pindar or pound keeper of Wakefield is the subject of a prose poem that is supposed to date back as far as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The *Cat and Kittens* also, which still exists in a lane leading off Eastcheap, has no connection with these domestic animals, but belongs to the days when a quart pot was known as a cat and a half pint ditto as a kitten.

Other quaint signs still to be found in London include the *Cock and Bottle* (a probable corruption of Cork and Bottle), the *Goat in Boots*,

the *Magpie and Punch Bowl* (two equally mischievous articles), the *Maid and Magpie* (another mischievous combination), the *Five Bells and Blade Bone*, the *Coffee Pot* (not a Temperance Hotel), the *Antigallican*, the *Cat and Mutton*, the *Blue-eyed Maid*, the *Hat and Tin*, the *Lamb and Lark*, the *Hand and Marigold*, the *George and Guy*, the *Flower Pot*, the *Knave of Clubs*, the *Bear and Rummer*, the *Hoop and Toy*, the *Running Footman* (reminiscent of the days when footmen ran before the carriage to clear the way), the *Sash and Cocoa Tree*, the *Crown and Two Chairmen*, the *Apple Tree and Mitre*, the *Ship and Camel* (an obvious attempt to couple the ship of the sea and the ship of the desert), the *Ship Aground*, the *Half Moon and Bull's Head*, the *Hog in the Pound* (changed at one time to the *Gentleman in Trouble* but now returned to its original form), and *Old Parr's Head*

There are one or two quaint circumstances and stories on the subject of signs sufficiently humorous to merit their preservation. Thus at one time there existed amid the nest of alleys which then lay at the back of where the Law Courts now stand a tavern with the unusual sign of the *Bible*. This was a frequent rendezvous for highwaymen, and was much frequented by the famous Jack Sheppard.

Another story relates to the present Golden Square, which at one time was known as

Gelding Square, taking its name from a public-house called the *Gelding*, which displayed the sign of a grey horse. Unfortunately this name did not commend itself to some of the dear old lady residents and as a result of a memorial to the authorities the name was changed to that at present in use.

During the early part of the nineteenth century there stood on the outskirts of London a very popular public-house known as the *Cock*. With the idea of improving custom the landlord decided to change the name to the *Bishop of Landaff*, a popular prelate of the period, and the sign was therefore altered and embellished with a painting of the cleric. Thereupon the owner of a rival house across the way realising that there is oftentimes a great deal in a name, changed his sign to that of the *Cock*, and in due time drew away all the old customers to the *New Cock*. To counteract this the first landlord had this inscription painted under the picture of the bishop:

"This is the old Cock."

Recently a party of Americans were being taken on a motor trip round London. At length they came to a famous old inn with a well known sign. "We are now passing one of the most famous public houses in England," explained the guide. "Why?" bellowed the thirsty chorus!

A good story apropos of signs is that of the traveller who making his way along a lonely

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## CHAPTER IV

### CABS, TAXIS, TRAMS AND BUSES

LONDON, with now the world's finest bus service, owes the introduction of that democratic method of conveyance to a Parisian coach-builder. This was George Shillibeer, at one time a midshipman in the British Navy, who, after quitting the service, started business in Paris as a coach-builder and met with considerable success. He then conceived the idea of running public vehicles in London and disposing of his Paris business, took premises at Bury Street, Bloomsbury, and in July, 1829, introduced the first vehicle that plied for hire.

At first these vehicles were only two in number, and they ran from Marylebone Road to the Bank, the charge for each person being one shilling. Each bus made twelve journeys a day and was generally full, the takings averaging £100 a week.

These early buses, forerunners of our present magnificent service, were in many respects very quaint. They carried twenty-four passengers, all inside, and were drawn by three horses. The conductor hung on as best he could

road late at night came at last to an inn with the sign of the *George and Dragon*. He knocked at the door and was answered by a fierce looking woman who, putting her head out of the window, asked what he wanted. "A drink," answered the traveller. "Go away before I set the dog on you," said the woman. "Well, in that case," came the reply, "will you please tell George that I'd like a word with him."



can he turn and talk to the pretty girl in the seat behind him, but with stern set face, cut off from the rest of the world, he threads his silent way through the maze of London traffic.

As a result of his close proximity to his passengers the old horse-bus driver was constantly being appealed to for information, and consequently grew into something like a humorous encyclopaedia. Naturally he was an authority on horse-racing, but, in addition, his was the last word on everything from high finance to a cure for a cold. The remedy in the latter case was always "something hot". He was a man whom no news could startle, no information could surprise,—he had always heard a rumour of it some days before.

Sometimes it happened that the passengers' desire for information was so exacting as to bring out all the driver's latent sarcasm, and here the late Pett Ridge comes in with a good story. Two American ladies, getting on top of a horse bus at Trafalgar Square, fired half a dozen questions at the driver even before he started. Seeing that he was in for a busy half hour the driver himself took up the running. "Look here, ladies," he said, "that's the statue of Nelson on the left. Saint Martin's Church is here on the right. Farther on we pass by the Garrick Theatre and Wyndham's,

behind, and to while away the journey, newspapers were provided for the passengers. There was no official regulation as regards fares, and when business was brisk they would often go up with a bound. It was not until 1853 that Parliament took this new method of conveyance in hand and passed the necessary legislation.

In their early days these buses were popularly known as "Shillibeers", but when, at a later date, Shillibeer turned undertaker, and his 'Shillibeer's Funeral Coaches' became well advertised, the name naturally became very unpopular.

The defalcations of the conductors, on whom at this time there was no check, were a great source of trouble to the early proprietors. The earliest attempt to remedy this was made by fixing a clock in a prominent place in the vehicle, it being the conductor's duty to move the hand of this a certain distance every time a passenger entered the vehicle. Passengers were further requested to report any neglect of this duty to the proprietor. The scheme, however, did not last long. In the main the conductors ignored the clock while would be humorous fares frequently amused themselves by turning the hand until the register showed an impossible number of people.

The introduction of outside seats soon brought in its train another difficulty for it proved

impossible for ladies wearing the crinoline of the period to ride outside the bus. The ascent was somewhat of a precarious business, since passengers had to climb up a small iron ladder somewhat similar to those found on the outside of a ship. In wet weather men inside were constantly being requested by the conductors to "oblige a lady" by giving up their seats and going on top. A popular comic song of some fifty or sixty years ago refers to this practice, the refrain running as follows —

' Full inside full inside  
 Who'll oblige a lady?  
 Who wants to go to Pimlico?  
 There is no room inside  
 Full inside full inside  
 Who'll oblige a lady?  
 Will any gent get out on top?  
 For a lady wants to ride

The introduction of the hansom cab was a great boon to the novelists of the period as it gave them a new motif around which to weave their plots, soon the new vehicle steadily gliding on its way through London's night, became a prominent feature of every new novel. It was many years however, before it earned the title given to it by George Augustus Sala of "London's gondola." In its earlier stages it rather resembled the type of vehicle in which cattle are taken to market. Its

wheels were high, its body nearly touched the ground, while the door was placed variously in front, at the side, at the back, and in one case the passenger even entered through the wheels

Much that was humorous has gone from our streets with the passing of the old-time methods of conveyance. The old-time driver was an authority, not only on horses, but on everything under the sun. His was the last word in religion, law or politics. He was at one and the same time the pride and the terror of London. Nervous old ladies and gentlemen would enter a cab trembling as to what would happen if they did not satisfy the cabby's usual exorbitant demands. Few, indeed, were so mild as the Jehu, who, receiving his exact fare from an old lady who tipped the scale at somewhere about seventeen stone, looked her up and down and then emphatically said, "I'll leave you to the Almighty, ma'am."

Our modern methods of locomotion have produced a new sort of man—a mechanical man. Personal relationship between the driver and his fares no longer exists, and the cheerful conversation of the box seat is a thing of the past. With the growth of our traffic the driver's duties have become more insistent, while the very structure of the vehicle cuts him off from all communication. No longer

can he turn and talk to the pretty girl in the seat behind him, but with stern set face, cut off from the rest of the world, he threads his silent way through the maze of London traffic.

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the back entrance to the Alhambra and the front of the Hippodrome. A little higher up, if all goes well, we see the Palace, and farther on, unless you're suffering from a nasty cold, you'll tell when we go by Crosse and Blackwell's. Half way up Tottenham Court Road we shall see, by the 'elp of Providence, Whitfield's Tabernacle, and not much then till we get to the Cobden Statue. Higher up the Britannia and the Adelaide, where we stop and go no further. And"—with a flick of his whip—"this is the bus, and them's the 'osses, and I'm the poor bloomin' driver, and I've got tinned lobster for supper, and now you know pretty nigh as much about it all as what I do."

Although the old bus driver was usually a mine of general information, his choice of words in imparting it sometimes verged on the ludicrous. One of the fraternity had been giving a favoured passenger some special and exclusive information regarding the Royal Family. "But mind," he concluded, "you must treat this as strictly *infra dig*; what I mean to say is that it mustn't go any further."

Though in the main a follower of the Sport of Kings, it did not follow that the driver was always one of those prepared to hazard their most intimate garments in the endeavour to back their fancy. Thinking to find a kindred

spirit a somewhat callow youth confessed to an old horse bus driver that he had lost his week's wages at Epsom. Finally he asked whether the driver ever backed horses. "Yes, I did once," was the reply, "and I lost twenty quid. I backed a couple of horses and a bus into a plate glass window."

The growler and the hansom have now almost disappeared from our streets, and though last year nearly a hundred four-wheelers were licensed in the metropolitan area, the number of hansoms was only seven. The usual resort of these old "growlers" is the railway station, where they pick up nervous old ladies from the country. Some, however, seem to prefer only to come out at night, the reason for this was once explained by an old driver. "Yes, sir, no matter what the weather is you'll always find me on the rank when the pubs close. You see I allus carries a gallon jar o' bitter beer under the seat, and when sporty lookin' blokes hails me for fun I allus say, 'You don't mind not knocking over my supper beer wot's under the seat, do you, mister?' and somehow or other that leads to an understanding, an'—well, I'm working up quite a steady, quiet connection."

The passing of the hansom and the growler has banished two striking and humorous personalities from our streets. The old coachman, who had spent a lifetime in the one occupation

starting first as stable-boy, was usually the very soul of humour, and though the taxi driver and the conductor of to-day have the same gift, it is only in a modified degree. It would almost seem as if a connection with horses brought out humour, and one with machinery discouraged it, or that the spirit of humour goes out as the spirit of petrol comes in.

But one distinction must be made between the drivers of horse vehicles; while the humour of the hansom cab-driver was usually bright and keen as a rapier, that of the growler was pessimistic and heavy, as witness the one who, being badly worsted by an old lady in a dispute over the fare, retaliated as follows. "Well, I 'ope as the next four-wheeler you take, mum, will be a hearse."

Or the similar case where an old lady, who could not see eye to eye with the cabby on the question of fare, finally remarked, "Don't you try to tell me anything, my good man. I haven't been riding in cabs for twenty years for nothing!" "No," replied the cabby, with a world of meaning in his tone, as he took up the reins and prepared to depart, "No, but I bet you had a damn good try."

Contrast with this the reply of the hansom cab driver who, receiving his minimum fare all in coppers, quietly said as he counted them over, "One for the missus, one for myself, two



for the nippers, and—I'll bank the rest." Or again the cabby of whose horse the fare had dared to complain, "Shockin' bad 'orse 'ave I? And what's the extra tuppence for? To buy a new one wiv?" What, too, could have been more cutting than the retort of the Irish born cabman who had got in the way of the Lord Mayor's coach and his lordship had instructed his coachman to take the cabman's number. "Arrah, get in out o' that ye ould twelve months' aristocrat," said the indignant Jehu.

As is the case to-day, the question of fares provoked the most humour, and when cabby had received only that to which he was legally entitled his sarcasm was usually very much in evidence. At that period there were few fares who had not at some time or other heard the indignant query, "'Ere, wot d'yer call this?" A cabman had received his exact legal fare, but with not a penny in addition. "'Ere, wot d'yer call this?" he said indignantly. "That's your legal fare," said his irate passenger, "and let me tell you that I'd sooner ride in a hearse than in your cab." "Yes," retorted cabby, "and I'd jolly well rather drive a hearse—if you was in it."

In another case, with no tip forthcoming, there was, strange to say, no outburst, and the driver, looking all that he felt, contented himself with saying, "Well, I should say pound

notes slip through your fingers as easy as fly-papers."

The late Duke of Cambridge had the undeserved reputation of being very mean. He came out of the old War Office in Pall Mall on one occasion, hailed a cab and asked to be driven to Victoria. The cabman, instead of taking the direct route, drove him via Charing Cross and Whitehall, but on alighting at Victoria the Duke tendered only a shilling, the legal fare by the direct route. It was in vain that cabby expostulated, the answer of the Duke being that he should have gone by the direct road through St. James' Park. "Sorry, sir," said the cabman, who all the time knew his distinguished fare, "but Saint James' Park is closed." "Closed," said the Duke, "I haven't heard anything about it. Why is it closed?" "Well," was the reply, "they do say as 'ow the Dook of Cambridge dropped a three-penny bit there last week and they've closed the Park till they find it."

The time-honoured dispute about distance had given rise to some pretty healthy lying on the part of cabby. "I wonder you haven't more regard for the truth," said the fare. "I've too much regard for it to be dragging it out on every paltry occasion," was the convincing reply.

With a good tip there usually appeared a different side of cabby's character. "That's

a mistake was made in payment, provided such mistake was in his favour. The following incident occurred in the far-off days when gold coinage was in use. A driver, given a sovereign by a young man in mistake for a shilling, at once whipped up his horse and drove rapidly away. Looking round he found his late fare following at a run, and thinking he had found out the mistake the driver endeavoured to out distance him but without success. At length, reaching the Embankment, and realising that he could not shake off his pursuer, he got rid of the incriminating evidence by throwing the sovereign into the river, and then pulled up ready to meet any accusation. To his amazement, however, the young man on coming up only said, "My father's in the cab." The driver had not noticed him get in, and when the young man gave him the sovereign he had driven off before the old fellow had time to get out.

An American on his first visit to London, being told that the fare was three shillings, handed over that amount with a generous tip of two more. Unfortunately being new to our coinage what he handed out as shillings were really half crowns. The driver to whom this had happened concluded his story by naively saying "And before I could recover from my surprise to call out and tell him he was lost in the crowd."

The warfare between the horse cab and the taxi was long and bitter and for some time our streets were enlivened with such terms as "tin kettle on wheels" and "cat's meat", but those of us who have a sympathy, in spite of his faults, with the old-time Jehu will appreciate the story of the taxi-man who, in a block in the traffic, hailed his horse confrère with the query. "Wot's the matter wiv you?" "There ain't nuffink the matter wiv me," was the reply of the hansom. "Then why did you give me such a nasty look?" queried taxi once more. "I didn't give it yer," was the crushing reply, "Yer had it to start wiv."

Or again the case where a 40 h.p. car had run into the back of a growler. Looking at the culprit the cabman delivered himself as follows:— "Ah, yer blinkin' coward. Forty against one."

But cabby has now fallen on evil days and the few that remain on our streets are no longer of the dashing type that marked the later days of Queen Victoria's reign, and instead of the smart middle-aged driver, with often a flower in his buttonhole, we have now only decrepit old gentlemen with a very gloomy outlook on life. With a transport strike a few hansoms re-appear once more, both horse and man twenty years older, though looking much the same, though a marked difference lies in the fact that the old bullying manner has gone

with the driver to be taken to his destination for half-a-crown. After some amount of bargaining the latter agreed. "Look here," said the Jew, "we're both sportsmen. I'll toss you double or quits." The coin was spun and the cabman won. "Hang it," said the Jew after looking at the coin, "I shall have to walk home after all."

A writer on our great city has declared that London has always been reluctant to change, and if this is really the case, the taxi driver can be written down as a typical Londoner. No matter what coin is offered him he never has the necessary change, and the search for it is a long and laborious proceeding, involving the undoing of several layers of waistcoats. The driver with an accessible pocket—if one is ever found—will stand out for all time as something unique.

London drivers, according to A. A., would appear to be recruited from all classes of society, as in their ranks at present are to be found, among others, a lieutenant-colonel, a V.C. captain, a couple of ex-naval officers, a doctor, a clergyman, a champion dirt-track rider, a one-time assistant to a well-known music-hall comedian, a painter of good pictures, an author, and one who can speak nine languages and quote Homer by the yard. On the other hand there are a good many drivers whose outlook is still narrow and parochial. One such

individual was discussing with a colleague on the rank the enormity of "furriners comin' over 'ere and taking the bread out of our mouths", when he was hailed by a Frenchman, who was evidently very much at sea as regards his locality. Asked to where he wanted to be driven, he gave an address not more than fifty yards away. Such a heaven-sent opportunity could not be lost, so, hastily putting the Frenchman into the cab, cabby drove him round in a circle for about ten minutes, and then re-entered the street from the other end. Having received his fare, together with a satisfactory tip, he returned to the rank to continue his argument with, "Well, as I was a-saying, it ain't right for them furriners to come over 'ere and prevent us Britishers gettin' an 'onest living."

One of the most irritating troubles of a taxi-driver's life is the elderly person to whom a ride in a motor vehicle amidst London traffic is still an adventure. One such old lady had hired a taxi. "Now, driver," she cautioned, "you must be very careful. Don't go unless the policeman tells you, and don't drive fast in case the cab skids." "Orl rite, lydy," was the consoling reply, "and is there any particular 'orspital you refer?"

A dear old lady, on her first drive in a taxi, grew more and more alarmed as the driver continually put his hand out at the side as a

for ever. The horse cabby sadly realises that he is but a relic of a past age, and he is thankful for small mercies. One of the old Brigade was hailed by a gentleman obviously in a great hurry. "Half a sovereign for you if you get me to King's Cross in six minutes," shouted the excited fare. "It ain't no good, capting," came the sad reply. "You may bribe me but you can't corrupt the old 'oss." Or again the old lady who timidly enquired of the driver, "Does your horse ever shy at motors?" "Law bless you no, lady," came the reply; "he didn't even shy when railway trains came in." Even more illustrative of the lean days on which cabby has now fallen is the story of one who, cruising slowly along the street, hailed a prospective customer with: "'Ere y'are, sir. 'Ansoms are going cheap to-night."

But sometimes even yet the old witty spirit flashes out. "Here, cabby," shouted a belated wayfarer to one of London's few hansoms, "five bob if you get me to Charing Cross in ten minutes. Nothing if you don't." "I see," said the driver, "no cross, no crown."

A driver was standing close to his cab when a smart young man came along and began to make disparaging remarks on the outfit. Finally turning to the cabby he asked, "Is that your cab?" "It is." "Oh, I thought it was a cat's meat barrow," said the smart one. "Yes," came the quick reply, "and so will a lot more

people think it's a cat's meat barrow if they see a puppy smelling around it "

A great deal of taxi driver's humour also centres round the question of the tip In one case a Scot, after much careful thought, had tipped the driver a penny In the old traditional manner the driver looked at the coin and enquired, "What's this?" "Heids," said the Scot, and, looking at the coin in the driver's open hand and finding he was correct, took it up and put it back in his pocket with the remark, "You're a sportsman "

The taxi driver, when he receives only his strict legal fare, naturally becomes virtuously indignant "'Ope yer don't mind me giving it yer all in coppers, guv'nor?" was the remark made to one gentleman who tendered a shilling for a tenpenny fare and demanded the change. Even more cutting was the sarcasm addressed to the boy who was shutting the cab door "Arf a mo', sonny 'Fore you shut the door, just see if he's pinched my mat "

Scotsmen and Jews, from a payment point of view, are alleged to be the most unsatisfactory taxi passengers 'Here mon stop!' cried a fare from over the Border, 'I hae a weak heart, and I canna stand that bang't wee machine o' yours marking up the tuppences "

One of the chosen race compelled on one occasion to take a taxi, endeavoured to bargain



with the driver to be taken to his destination for half-a-crown. After some amount of bargaining the latter agreed. "Look here," said the Jew, "we're both sportsmen. I'll toss you double or quits." The coin was spun and the cabman won. "Hang it," said the Jew after looking at the coin, "I shall have to walk home after all."

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A dear old lady, on her first drive in a taxi, grew more and more alarmed as the driver continually put his hand out at the side as a

signal to the traffic following' At last she could contain herself no longer "Look here, young man," she said with decision, "you look after that car of yours and watch where you're going I'll tell you when it starts raining."

But when the fare is young and pretty a different side of the driver's character emerges A very smart young lady had employed a taxi for the greater part of the morning, and finally stopped at a place where she intended to lunch "I am here for an hour, lunching," she explained, "and I wish I could afford to keep you" "I was just thinking the same about you miss," came the heartfelt reply

It has been said that the taxi driver usually looks on the world with a jaundiced eye, if such is the case, it is probably due to the existence of the bilker The record for this particular form of crime is the case where a taxi was hired to go to Liverpool and on arriving there the fare entered a public house with entrances in two streets and was not seen again

Fortunately it sometimes happens that the bilker meets with his just reward One cheeky and impecunious individual, having reached his destination, calmly announced that he was penniless The driver did not take the information too well, whereupon the fare added

"Well, that's the position, old thing, and you can't get blood out of a stone." "Perhaps not," said the driver rolling up his sleeves, while the lust of battle shone in his eye, "but what the devil makes you think you're a stone?"

If ever the taxi men of London adopt a motto it should certainly be the same as that of the Royal Artillery, *Ubique*, for they are usually prepared to go anywhere at a moment's notice. The record in this respect is held by the driver who, cruising one morning for fares in the Strand, was hailed by two Americans who stepped into his cab with the simple direction 'Scotland'. Putting their luggage on top of the cab they started off on a sight-seeing tour of the Highlands which lasted ten days, during which period the cab covered over 2,000 miles. In addition to his fare the driver received a £10 tip and a diamond scarf pin.

Conversely the shortest fare was probably that of the young man who, having dined and wineed well, fell in through the door of the cab and as promptly fell out on the other side. Picking himself up he asked, 'How much?'

Though the driver, like a doctor, does not usually tout for custom, but waits to be called in, he is not, like the medico, above resorting to little dodges by which to increase his income

At one time a particular driver seemed to obtain a good deal more custom than his confrères on the rank, and they accordingly set themselves out to find how this was accomplished. It was then discovered that he had nailed a half-crown to the floor of his taxi, and that it was his custom to leave the door open so that it could be seen. We further have it on the authority of A.A., that this ruse was copied by an Aberdeen driver, but in his case he used three nails and the half-crown was a counterfeit one.

Apart from bilking a taxi-man is not often "done", one instance, however, he was badly beaten. During an epidemic of taxi stealing a driver took the precaution to padlock his wheel to a lamp-post while he went away to have his dinner. On his return he found the wheel still chained to the lamp-post but the car had gone, the thieves having taken off the old chained wheel and put on the spare one.

Although it must be admitted that the taxi-driver of to-day is not the equal in humour of his predecessor of the horse-drawn period yet he sometimes manages to get in a very useful retort. A lorry, coming away from Covent Garden and loaded with holly, was nearly run into by a taxi. The lorry driver filled with the spirit of Christmas had ornamented the bonnet of his vehicle with sprigs from his

cargo, but this did not prevent him from giving the culprit a bit of his mind. For some time the taxi driver listened in silence to the flow of language, and when it had somewhat died down he shook his head and said sadly, "Wot's the use of 'aving 'olly in yer bonnet if yer ain't got 'olly in yer heart!"

A taxi emerged from a side street without the driver sounding his horn and it narrowly escaped running into a lorry. The lorry driver was naturally indignant. "Why don't yer sound yer blinkin' 'orn?" he demanded. The taxi driver looked at him critically. "Why don't yer sound yer bloomin' atches?" he scornfully suggested.

The bus or tram driver is perhaps the least given to humour of all public servants, it has been alleged that he is restricted to two stock jokes. The first of these may be heard when his onward progress is impeded by a coal cart, and consists of, "Now then, short weight, hurry up", the second, "Got a bit of freehold there", does duty when another bus remains at a point a little longer than usual. In justice, to the driver, however, it should be said that the statement is not quite accurate, there are at least three other occasions when he lets himself go. The first is when some one cuts in in front of him, the second one occurs when he has to pull up rapidly to avoid running over some jay-walker, and the third is when

some vehicle in front neglects to give the usual traffic signals

The traffic had been blocked by a small three-wheeled car which, for some reason or other, stopped and refused to move. Immediately behind it was a bus whose further progress was thus held up. For a moment or two the driver of the bus gazed at the little car with a look that spoke volumes, and then in a loud but sympathetic voice enquired, "Say mate, won't your crystal set work?"

A bus was held up by an antiquated four wheeler that looked as though it had come out of the British Museum, and the bus driver soon began to make some very audible remarks about pink and crimson rabbit-hutches being allowed on the streets. Just as the torrent of words was in full spate a white headed old gentleman put his head out of the window of the four-wheeler, evidently with the intention of protesting at the language, but he popped it in again quickly enough when he was greeted with, 'Hallo, Bunny!'

A bus driver was just about to pull into the kerb at his usual stopping place when a smart victoria, drawn by a pair of high stepping chestnuts and driven by a coachman in gorgeous livery, cut in and ousted the bus. For a moment or two the driver of the latter looked on the verge of apoplexy, and then, recovering himself, he leaned forward and greeted the inter-

loper with, "Good morning, gardener. Coachman ill again?"

Jay-walking will rouse the bus-driver from his habitual taciturn condition as effectively as cutting in. An old lady, desirous of crossing the street, once started, became panic-stricken and did everything that she ought not to have done. First she ran one way, then stopped, next she retreated and then ran forward again. There was a crunching of brakes as the bus pulled up with a jerk. Then, leaning over the wheel, the driver said wearily, "Well mum, have you decided on anything yet?"

Another offender was an old gentleman, for whom the bus had to pull up sharply. "I say mate," said the weary driver, "I shouldn't do it that way if I were you. You'll find a tot of arsenic just as effective and not so messy."

A third occasion when the driver is moved to give utterance to his wrath is, as we have suggested, when some vehicle in front neglects to give the usual traffic signals. "Is your 'and too dirty to 'old out?" said one driver to another who had turned the corner without giving a signal.

Apart from these three general causes only some impending calamity can force an observation from the taciturn man at the wheel. A bus, mounting a steep incline on the outskirts of London, suddenly stopped and then began to



move backwards. "Hi, Alf," said the conductor, "she's running away." "I know she is," replied Alf as he tugged at the brakes, "and these carnation brakes won't 'old 'er." "Then wot are we going to do about it?" shouted the conductor in consternation. "Dunno," came the doleful answer; "perhaps you'd better change the destination boards."

The humour of our public transport service now largely centres round the bus and tram conductor, and it is on him that the mantle, once the property of the horse-cabman, has fallen. There has been a change of places and the driver has fallen out of the running, for it would seem that petrol is a spirit that will not harmonize with that of mirth.

There is no student of the life of our streets but has not a very sympathetic spot for the conductor, especially when it is considered how many absurd requests are made to him, and how many stupid questions he has to answer without daring to give the reply which the imbecility of the question warrants. How many of us would remain unruffled if asked by an old lady during the rush hours to, "Please put me down at the same place as you did last Friday week"?

But, as might be expected, there are times when his temper will not stand the strain, and then comes retaliation swift and sure. "Do you stop at the Ritz?" asked one old

lady who, throughout the journey, had been asking all kinds of irrelevant questions. "Stop at the Ritz, mum," came the quick reply, "Not bloomin' likely. Not on three quid a week."

One of these querulous persons who considers it necessary to comment on everything and complain whenever possible, said, in an aggrieved tone, after he had received his ticket, "I notice your bell didn't ring, conductor." "Well," said the latter who had had a busy and tiring day, "wot d'ye expect for tuppence, a brass band?"

The indignant lady or gentleman who considers that payment of a penny or twopence entitles them to treat the bus as a private vehicle is another great source of trouble to the conductor. "Why didn't the driver stop where I was standing?" said one indignant lady as she mounted the step, "I've been waving and shouting to him. Where are his eyes?" "Well, the fact is, lady," said the conductor, "he's only got one pair and he keeps them for his missus."

"Why didn't you stop?" said another angry old lady who had stationed herself midway between two stopping places. "Why didn't you pull up when you saw me signalling?" "Signalling, ma'am?" was the reply; "why I thought you were doing a step dance to that there organ."

An irate old gentleman had just managed to board a tram-car that had moved on rather quickly. "I never saw anything like the carelessness of you fellows," he gasped. "Just suppose I had slipped and lost a leg. What would have happened then?" "In that case, sir," the conductor quietly replied, "you wouldn't have had to do any more running for cars. We always stop for a man with a crutch."

One fussy old gentleman had asked to be put down at a certain point and in due course the bus pulled up at the desired place. "Here you are, sir," said the conductor. "Can't the driver go a little closer to the kerb?" demanded his aristocratic fare. "Certainly, sir," said the conductor, and shouted to the driver, "Pull up closer to the pavement, Bill. The gent cleans his own boots."

It was evident that the patience of the conductor, normally the soul of courtesy, was becoming exhausted, when the old lady asked for the n-th. time if the bus really did go up the Uxbridge Road. Being assured once more that it did she said, "Thank you very much and would you mind stopping at No. 573?" "Not at all, madam," replied the gallant conductor, "and shall I give one knock or two knocks at the door?"

"When does this bus get to Tottenham Court Road?" asked an old lady. "It seems

to take a long time getting there." "We don't go to Tottenham Court Road," growled the conductor who was not in the best of humours. "But it must go there," persisted the old lady. "There is a board at the back of the bus which has 'Tottenham Court Road' on it, and——" "Madam," said the conductor, "There's a board on the front of the bus with 'Nestle's Milk' on it, but we ain't going to Switzerland."

"You started before I was ready! How dare you move on before I was safely on the car! I'll have the law on you for it!" roared an apoplectic old sea captain who, owing to his own carelessness, had fallen in the road. "Nah then, old submarine," said the conductor, one-time stoker in His Majesty's Royal Navy, "none of your frightfulness."

The type of passenger who considers the bus a personal property is not confined to any one class, but to whatever grade of society he or she belongs the conductor's remarks are equally biting and appropriate. A lady, whose obvious occupation was that of a hawker of bananas, wishing to get off the bus, and not satisfied with one ring, performed the operation several times. The conductor looked over from the top of the vehicle, where he had gone to collect fares, and expostulated, "That'll do, my Banana Queen, one ring is sufficient, not the 'Blue Bells of Scotland'."

A by no means welcome type of passenger is the one who will ask a multitude of foolish questions, the answering of which hardly comes within the official duties of the conductor. An American of this type was "doing London from the top of a bus". "Say, Bo," he said, as they passed St. Paul's, "how long did it take to build that little old church?"

This was a little outside the conductor's knowledge, but, making a bold guess, he answered, "Twenty years." Passing the Law Courts there came again the query, "Say, Bo, how long did it take to build that little old house?" "Twenty years," said the conductor once more. "Gee," replied the Yankee, "you sure are some slow guys. In my country we could have done it in three months." Nothing more was said till Westminster was reached. "Say, Bo," said the American once more, "what's that place?" "The Houses of Parliament." "And how long did you slow ginks take to build that lot?" "Can't say," said the now fed-up conductor, "they hadn't started 'em when I passed here yesterday."

Another annoying class of passenger to the conductor is one who asks for some prominent building, and, when he stops the bus there, finds out that they only wish it pointed out and have no intention whatever of descending from their seat on top. An old lady had asked for St. Paul's, but when the bus stopped there

and the conductor went upstairs to inform her, she showed no signs of descending, but only asked, "Is that really St Paul's?" "Yes, it is," replied the conductor, "Come on, grandma I really can't take the bus any nearer for tuppence "

"Who is it wanted Westminster Abbey?" shouted another conductor as his bus drew up outside that famous building "I do," said an outside passenger, making no effort to move. "Well, you'll have to come down for it," he was told, "I can't very well fetch it up to you "

Change provides a further trial in the conductor's life. "I'm sorry I haven't a penny," said a lady tendering half-a-crown "Don't you worry, miss," came the reply, "you'll soon have twenty-nine" Another test of patience came from the small boy who tendered four farthings for a penny fare "Blimey," said the exasperated conductor, "you'll be bringing jam jars next "

Another trouble in the conductor's life, and one not often realised, comes with the difficulty of making his way through a crowded bus or tram to collect the fares without trampling on someone's corns, one cannot but sympathise with the conductor who, when a passenger complained, "You're very clumsy with your feet, conductor," retorted, "Well, wot d'ye expect for tuppence, Pavlover?"

Foremost in the ranks of troublesome passengers are the ladies who, returning from the stores during the sale season, fight their way to bus or tram in a manner that belies their name of the gentler sex "'Old 'ard, lidies," expostulated one conductor who had been nearly swept off his feet by the feminine tide, "this ole bus ain't in a rugger scrum"

A trial to the conductor is the love-sick youth who, having already spent an hour in saying good night to his beloved, wants to hang it out still further on the bus steps. 'Nah then, Romeo, hurry up," was the advice received by one of these youths

Most difficult of all, however, is the gentleman who has dined too well, the conductor, given half an excuse, will gladly leave him behind One such individual had hailed the bus "Full up," said the conductor, "mustn't take any more" "'Strordinary coincidence," murmured the festive one, "shame here, ole boy" The same information, "Full up", was given on another occasion, to be met with the reply, "Is thish a piece of information or some damned advice?"

An old gentleman, who had done himself well, entered a tramcar in which he was the only passenger Shortly after this a lady entered, and in spite of all her protestations,

the convivial one insisted upon her taking his seat while he hung precariously to the strap in an otherwise empty tram

Another gentleman in the same condition lurched into a tram and sat down beside a lady "Did you see me get in?" he asked after a time "I did," said the lady stiffly. After this there was a pause, and then came the triumphant query, "And how d'ye know it was me?"

A frequent source of trouble is the foreigner whose knowledge of English is not yet too good "I vant one I Oben (High Holborn) please," said a Teutonic gentleman "You want one eye open?" said the conductor, "Why, you've got one eye open, haven't you?" "No, no, I vant von Hi oben" "Oh do you," was the decisive reply, "well shut the other one then"

The fare who travels with a large number of huge parcels, very much to the discomfort of those sitting in his neighbourhood, is almost as disconcerting "How many more times are you going to use this bus for your parcels?" asked one conductor of an individual who, for the tenth time, dumped a huge parcel down by the staircase and made his way inside. "Only three times more, guv'nor," was the reply. "There's only the gas fire, the kitchen stove and the umbrella stand, and then we've moved"



As well as these more pronounced types the conductor has to cope with a large and indefinite class of which one of the worst is the would-be funny man. One such boarded a tram, and on the conductor coming round for fares, put on a look of childish innocence, and said, "I want a ticket, please." "Yes," said the conductor, "but where do you want to go?" "I want to go to Heaven, finally." "All right, hand over tuppence and I'll take you as far as the Angel."

Then comes the careless passenger who can never ride in a bus or tram without leaving some article behind. The prize in this respect must go to the woman, who, after a bus had arrived at Golder's Green and the conductor was just about to clock in, rushed up and enquired if they had found a small boy in the bus. When she was told they had not, she rushed off with, "Oh, dear. Then I must have left him in the shop."

Equally undesirable, is the passenger who, when there is any increase in the fares, thinks it necessary to vent his indignation on the unfortunate conductor. "All right, ma," replied the man with the punch to a lady who had expressed herself at some length on this subject. "I'll tell 'em everything you've said when I take the chair at the next directors' meeting."

A passenger, very much out of the ordinary, was a small boy with his head completely

enveloped in a saucepan, who was led on to a tram by his mother "Taking 'im to the 'orspital," she announced in explanation "But how did he get that thing on his head?" asked a passenger "Oh, 'e was playing at soldiers and wanted a 'elmet, so 'e took the sorsepan" "That'll be a bad job for him," said the enquirer "Yes," said the mother, "but worse for me That's the only sorsepan I've got and his father's dinner s in it"

But perhaps the most frequent, and the worst of all passengers from the conductors' point of view, are the fumlbers, a class to which the ladies are the greatest contributors These are the people who stop buses just when they are re starting, block up passages in our great stores while they stare aimlessly at nothing, write long letters at the telegram stands of crowded offices, and rummage in hand bags for quite ten minutes before they find the penny or twopence for their fare A fumbler entered a bus with a companion and when the conductor approached, announced that she would pay for both Then came the usual fumble while the conductor patiently waited Finally the patience of the companion came to an end, and leaning forward, she said Let s go halves in this, Mrs. Brown You fumble and I ll pay '

Another fumbler, a male, entered a crowded bus, and had to strap hang When the conductor approached to collect fares, he hung

on with one hand while he fumbled in his pockets without success. Finally, in desperation, he turned to another passenger and said, "Here mate, you hold this strap until I pay the bloke."

A sub-division of this class, and certainly the worst, includes the person who, after prolonged fumbling, is certain he or she, but generally she, has dropped some money on the floor of the vehicle. It is here that the conductor, only too gladly, gets an opportunity of scoring. "Anybody lost two bob?" said a conductor, stooping down and picking up something from the floor. There was at once a hurried search of pockets and hand-bags and then came a triumphant, "I have," from one old fumbler. "All right, mum," came the reply, "then here's a ha'penny of it."

It is, however, the crowded bus or tram-car that provides us with a wealth of humour. It was a very wet day and a dear old lady had waited long and patiently for a bus. At last one with an open top drew up. "Have you any sitting room inside?" she enquired. "No mum," replied the conductor with old-world courtesy, "but we've a bathroom on top."

"Madam," said the gentleman who was seated, to the strap-hanging lady, "you will pardon me but you're standing on my feet." "Yes," was the acid reply, "and if you were

anything of a man you'd be standing on them yourself."

A lady, weighing somewhere about eighteen stone, entered a car that was full. "If there were any gentlemen here," she remarked in vitriolic tones, "they would not allow a lady to stand." At this point a very small man got up. "Don't be cross, ma'am," he said, "I'll make one towards it."

In a similar case a working man got up and offered his seat to a lady. "Thank you very much," she said as she dropped into the proffered seat. "That's orl rite, mum," was the rejoinder. "Wot I sez is a man ort never to let a woman stand. Some men never get up unless she is pretty but ye see, mum, it don't make no difference to me."

But it sometimes happens that the courteous man who offers his seat does not always get the thanks that are his due. A very slim young man in a crowded tramcar was wedged in between two very stout persons. A very stout lady entered and the young man rising said politely, "Won't you take my seat?" For a moment the new-comer looked at the place where he had apparently been sitting and then, looking puzzled, said, "On whose lap were you sitting?"

"I hate buses," said father as the family descended from the vehicle, "they're always so crowded!" "But daddy, you had a seat

to day," commented his little son "I know that," was the sad reply, 'but your poor mother had to stand all the way'"

Little Mary was sitting in a crowded car between her mother and her very stout uncle. A lady entered the car for whom there was no seat. "Don't you think, my dear," ventured the mother, "that you could sit on Uncle's knee and let that lady sit down?" For a moment or two Mary considered the suggestion. "I don't think so," she said at length, "uncle breathes too far down and would push me off."

"Where are your eyes?" queried a bad-tempered individual in a crowded bus on whose toes another passenger had inadvertently trodden. "In my head," was the reply. "Well, can't you see my feet?" "Of course not. You've your boots on."

"How clumsy you are!" said one woman to another, "you might have broken my instep." The culprit was profuse in her apologies but the injured one was in no way mollified. "Do you think my feet were made for an idiot to walk on?" she enquired again. "It almost looks as if they were," replied the other, who had had enough of the argument.

A very stout woman seated herself on the knee of her very small husband, completely overshadowing him, when the conductor came

round for the fares. "Two," said the lady brusquely. "One will do, madam," said the polite conductor, "we don't make any extra charge for size." At this the lady exploded, treating the conductor to some choice verbal fireworks. "She wants to pay for her husband. She's sitting on him," explained another passenger. "Oh," said the conductor, "Well I reckon it isn't the first time she's done that."

A conductor's difficulty in these democratic days when even the great ones of the earth use public conveyances is that he can never be certain as to whether he is or is not entertaining angels unawares. A benevolent-looking white-haired old gentleman, whose real profession was that of an actor, entered a bus. "George," said the conductor going round at the first stop to speak to the driver, "I do believe we've got the Archbishop of Canterbury on board." "Ask him and make sure," said the driver. Returning to his platform the conductor proceeded to do this and was received with a volley of abuse that was certainly not of ecclesiastical origin. "George," said the conductor returning in a subdued manner, "so far as I've been able to gather it isn't the Archbishop."

With so very many trials in his life one can sympathise with the conductor who, discussing existence generally, remarked, "I wish I was in Heaven, blest if I don't." "I wish

I was in a nice snug warm bar," said his companion "That's just like you," retorted No 1, "you're always wanting the best of everything"

More emphatic still was the one who, when the good and inquisitive old lady asked him, "I suppose you conductors suffer a good deal of temptation?" replied, "Yes, mum, we suffers cruel" "Ah," continued the old lady, "you mean of course in the direction of intemperance?" "No, mum, murder!"

## CHAPTER V

### WINDOW TICKETS AND NOTICES

LIARS, it has been said, may be divided into three classes, simple liars, damned liars and expert witnesses. A better division would be into four, simple liars, writers of epitaphs, expert witnesses and window tickets. Of the four, the last is the most numerous and the most guilty.

For my own part I can never look into a shop window without wondering whether anyone ever believes the tickets with which the goods are labelled. If they don't,—as is probably the case,—why are window tickets ever used?

Is there anything which can so dispose a man to unbelief as these same tickets, when, as a general rule, each one contradicts the others? While, on the one hand, we are told that an article is "The latest fashion" the next of the series, differing in every essential, is labelled "The latest mode", while a third, which bears no resemblance whatever to the first two, boldly flaunts itself as "All the rage". Now, fashion is a thing which is clearly defined, and from which there can be no deviation, and it is more than puzzling how three articles of



the same description, but widely differing in construction, can at one and the same time all claim to be the last word in fashion.

What is the relative value of these notices? Is "Extra special" better than "Very special", and is "Unique offer" something superior or inferior to both of them? Should one take the article marked "Very choice" rather than that labelled "Unequaled", or should one purchase a "Wonderful bargain" and not consider the claims of "Below cost price"? It's all very complex to the average lay mind.

Apparently, as in real life, there are many grades of society in the window-ticket world, and in the highest circles it is necessary for the eulogy to be in French. Consequently we are informed that the article advertised is "Le dernier cri" or "Le beau monde" or "Très chic". Starting from this high and aristocratic point we work down through the great middle class, of which "Extra special" and "Great bargain" are good representatives, until we come to the very democracy of tickets in "You find the girl, we do the rest", or, "Look, mother, here's a bargain"!

This use of window tickets with French wording is sometimes attended with danger, as in the case of the pork-butcher who, having bought a bankrupt stock of these articles, looked at his joints of pork labelled "Très chic" or "Le beau monde" and wondered

whether it was quite correct. More successful, however, was the suburban window-dresser, who, complacently surveying his goods, labelled in the same manner, remarked, "Well if these bits o' French don't fetch 'em I don't know my Brixton"

Perhaps, also, wisdom was shewn by the coal dealer who advertised his wares in the following notice, "Coal delivered a la carte or coal de sac"

In his desire to call attention to the excellence of his goods the shopkeeper sometimes goes a little too far in his eulogy, with the unfortunate result that he conveys an entirely different idea to what he intended, as in the case of the grocer who proudly labelled his butter, "Try our 1/- butter No one can touch it." Equally unfortunate was the dairyman who eulogised his milk as follows, "Try our milk Cream ain't in it", and the butcher who announced to his customers, "Beef is very high Our prices are the same" Running these three very closely for pride of place was the grocer who proudly placarded his windows with the notice, "Don't go elsewhere to be cheated—come here", while very far from what he intended was the chemist who advertised, "All kinds of drugs and dying stuffs sold here" Deserving also of honourable mention in the "things that might have been expressed differently" competition was the confectioner

who labelled his ice-cream with the notice, "Take a brick home. Splendid for visitors", as was the draper who announced "A large stock of ladies' hose, pure cashmere, to be cleared at 8½d. per pair. They won't last long at this price".

The recent "Buy British Campaign" was responsible for a large addition to the great army of window bills, and in a thousand and one ways the purchaser was exhorted to lay out his money only on articles of home manufacture. In one case, however, the worthy tradesman gave advice that, if followed, would have soon landed him in the Bankruptcy Court, seeing that his windows were labelled, "Keep your money at home". Wiser, and evidently endowed with a gift of quiet humour, was the provision dealer who during the same period displayed the sign, "When visiting Shakespeare's England eat England's Bacon".

At the commencement of this chapter it was stated that window tickets may be enumerated amongst the world's greatest liars. There is on record, however, one case where it still remains uncertain whether truth or falsehood prevailed. The proprietor of the shop was an Irishman, whose goods were not always conspicuous for their freshness; he wished to notify the public that he could meet all their possible wants, and at the same time attempted to present this in a novel form. His bill was

worded as follows: "Every damned thing sold here".

With some not too honest tradesmen it sometimes happens that these notices are not intended to convey the meaning that the simple purchaser naturally puts upon them. An indignant customer had returned to the shop with some eggs that had been taken from a box marked "Fresh this morning". "Fresh," she complained, "why two of them were addled. How dare you label them 'Fresh this morning'?" "Madam," replied the imperturbable egg-vendor, "it's the label that's fresh, not the eggs."

There is one ticket that we must admire and look on as the bluff, honest old yeoman of his particular world, and that is the simple one, "Cheap". The great merit of this old fellow is that he doesn't pretend to be what he is not. He doesn't aspire to be "Extra special", "Aristocratic", "Striking", "The latest fashion" or even "A bargain", but is content with the honest assertion that he can probably fill your wants at a reasonable figure. If, like his fellows, he speaks for himself, he at least speaks with commendable modesty. Compare him with the flaunting coxcomb who blatantly throws out the challenge that if you don't see what you want in the window you are to step inside. This boaster knows very well that if you foolishly accept the invitation you

will, more probably than not, be still unable to find what you require, but there is the chance that once in the net you may be palmed off with some article which you do not want in the least

House agents would seem to be the greatest offenders in the never-ending struggle to make goods appear other than what they are. The modern jerry-built semi detached residence, in their hands, can be made to appear as a residence even fit for a cinema star. We have probably all heard of the man who was prepared to sell his house for £1,500, but, reading the house agent's description of it and not recognising it as his own, at once made an offer of £2,500. Although most of these gentlemen also advertise themselves as "land agents and surveyors" they appear to have very little idea of distance, especially as regards what constitutes a stone's throw. A prospective purchaser was taken to view a house advertised as "within a stone's throw of the railway station". He walked for about a quarter of an hour and then turned to the agent and said blandly, 'I say, I should be awfully obliged if you would introduce me to the chap who threw that stone'.

On the other hand refreshingly truthful was the agent who advertised a property as follows "Handsome bungalowette, with a garagette, kitchenette, bathette, parlourette and porchette."

The publican often strikes an unusual note in the matter of notices, most of them being in the nature of guides to conduct, and generally, like those on railway stations, of a prohibitive nature. Illustrative of this, and probably of American birth, was the one exhibited in a saloon bar, "Those who expectorate cannot expect to rate as gentlemen."

A notice frequently to be found in public houses or on coffee stalls deals with the question of "trust", and runs as follows —

Since man to man is so unjust  
 No man can tell which man to trust,  
 I've trusted many to my sorrow,  
 So pay to-day and trust to-morrow  
 Friends did come and I did trust 'em  
 I lost their money and their custom  
 To lose them both did grieve me sore  
 So I've resolved to trust no more

A small restaurant proprietor has managed to convey a prohibitive notice in a novel form. A placard on the wall notifies his customers that, "Our spoons are not medicine. They must not be taken after meals."

The publican's prohibitive notices usually are quite definite but, when he tries to advertise his goods or accommodation, it sometimes happens that, like the shopkeeper, he becomes ambiguous. This was certainly the case with a enterprising inn keeper who displayed the following sign in his windows, To Cyclists

and Photographers Try our 1/6 luncheon Dark room provided for developments". Almost as tactless were the proprietors of a public dance hall who notified their patrons to the effect that, "the directors have the right to refuse admittance to any lady they think proper"

Some years ago a very common sign on public houses was that of "Retailer of Beer, Wine and Spirits To be drunk on the premises", thus denoting that the house held an "On" as distinct from an "Off" licence. It was sometimes considered by the unlettered that the existence of such a notice gave permission for the frequenters of the house to get drunk on the premises without being liable to interference on the part of the law. Similarly, open to misconstruction, is the notice often found in Temperance Hotels, "Porter kept on the premises"

We find examples of signs that do not always convey the impression that the writer wishes in every class of life. Quite recently near Charing Cross there stood a pavement artist who added as an extra attraction to his boards a model boat made of tin. The legend underneath ran

"Model boat—all my own work  
I have a wife and three children  
Made from old tins "

In a second hand clothier's window, filled with garments of every description, bearing such tickets as "Misfit", "Tailor's Sample", etc., a decidedly novel note was struck where a particularly loud pair of plus fours was labelled, "This garment was uncalled for"

Public notices are generally of a prohibitive nature, and are to be found in the greatest profusion in the neighbourhood of railway stations. On one occasion a traveller waiting for his train was enjoying his pipe in the waiting room when an employee of the company entered and drew his attention to the fact that there was a notice on the wall prohibiting smoking. "Do you mean to tell me," enquired the smoker, "that I am to obey every instruction I find on these walls?" "Certainly," was the reply. "Then what am I to do about that one?" queried the traveller, pointing to a notice which read, "Wear Blank's Corsets"

An old Scotsman and his wife who had come to London were making their first trip on a lift. "Jamie," said the old lady as the lift began to ascend, 'I'm feeling sick. Guid sakes, woman, you'll ruin us,' said the anguished husband, 'D'ye no see yon notice saying it's forty shillings fine for a wee spit?'

But in both our public and private notices we have not gone so far as America. Perhaps the height of bad taste was reached in the



one seen by Jerome K. Jerome in a New York window. It ran, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". It was an advertisement for some one's spring mattress. In another case, in equally doubtful taste, the notice ran, "In God we trust All others spot cash".

Official notices in America are often much more direct and humorous than our stolid and respectful ones, this especially applies to those concerning traffic, of which the following are examples

"Dangerous curve ahead  
Nearest hospital 21 miles  
Nearest cemetery 18 miles "

"He tried to cross the railroad track  
Before a rushing train  
They put the pieces in the sack  
But couldn't find the brain "

"Drive slow and see our beautiful city  
Drive fast and see our beautiful gaol "

## CHAPTER VI

### STREET HAWKERS AND STREET PERFORMERS

OF all the prohibitive notices to be seen in our streets and roads none is so objectionable in one respect as the familiar "No hawkers, no circulars" Affixed to the gate of some small semi-detached villa, which rejoices in some such high sounding name as *Balmoral* or *Kenilworth*, it would seem to be almost the last word in snobbery "We are such very important people," it would seem to say, "we, who live in this desirable semi-detached villa residence with bath h & c We want no hawkers Let them go to commoner people, we are in that grade of society where the tradesman calls for orders at the side entrance, and our staff of servants, (one small maid or, more probably, a two-days a week "char"), cannot be troubled to answer the door to other than visitors or legitimate tradesmen Besides, to purchase at the door is a crime unpardonable in our set It really isn't done, you know! Neither do we require circulars, we have had the benefit of a High School education and are learned in the ways

of the world. We know just what we want and require no teaching. We have our fixed opinions on religion, politics and such like topics, and we want no notices calling us to meetings, for, in our case, there is no necessity for further teaching. Such education is for the lower classes and not for people like us."

How strange this notice would have seemed in mediaeval days when both in cottage and baronial hall the pedlar was always a welcome guest, when, not only was he given every opportunity to display his wares, but was also certain of food and shelter. There was no bar to his admittance in those times, but in the glow of the blazing fire gentle and simple gathered round his small stock to examine and buy, and to give and learn the news of the countryside. Those were rough days, when only too often might was right, but I wonder if, with all our boasted civilisation and progress, there was not more practical Christianity then than now. At any rate there was always the open door to the poor and needy.

Besides, dear madam of *Kenilworth*, fair custodian of a mansion consisting of four bedrooms, dining and drawing room, kitchen, bath h. & c. and a garden, not greatly exceeding the size of a decent pocket handkerchief, is not, in some sense, your own husband a hawker? Although he does not go from door

send them to all and sundry? Moreover when you die won't you feel more content in your passing if you know that the following week's issue will give you a notice of at least twenty lines extolling your virtues? Circulars dear Madam, merely circulars

And you, sir, master of the *Kemilworth* demesne, are you, too, not overjoyed when the chairman at the annual dinner of the Lawn Tennis Club, in giving the toast of your health, speaks of your work as secretary and alludes to you as our highly respected and esteemed fellow townsman? Circulars, my dear sir, circulars, but that little eulogy, deserved or otherwise, is sweeter music to you, is it not, than the thanks of some poor broken down hawker from whom you might have made a small purchase had you not barred your gate to him?

How inconsistent we are We all, at the bottom of our hearts, love circulars—if they concern ourselves—and the bulk of us are, in some form or other, merely hawkers We want our little world, consisting, perhaps, of some dozen families, to be circularised about our goings, our comings and our doings, and we want to figure and strut in the foreground of our little stage, that all the world, consisting of the same dozen families, may know that we are there and very much to the front Surely, whether it is goods we have to sell, or ideas of our own that we wish others to adopt,

are we not all hawkers in the way we bring them before all and sundry?

There is no one much acquainted with street hawkers but must admit that with their ready wit they are great contributors to the humour of our streets, and that much entertainment will be lost if ever they disappear from our highways.

The fraternity generally has several striking characteristics, the first of these undoubtedly being their wonderful enterprise and power of salesmanship. Hawking is essentially a trade for the mind quick to seize its opportunity. "Where am I?" asked a man who had been knocked down by a motor car and was just emerging from unconsciousness. "'Ere you are, sir," replied one of these merchants, who had just come on the scene, "Map o' London, one penny." And what could have been more convincing than the speech of the vendor of quack medicines who thus addressed the crowd. "'Ere ye are, gents, sixpence a bottle. Founded on the researches of modern science. Where should we be wivout science? Look at the ancient Britons, they hadn't got no modern science and where are they now? Dead and buried, every one of them."

In another case a householder had affixed to his gate the prohibitive notice "No hawkers, no circulars", but in the course of time this had become somewhat worn and dilapidated.

Answering a knock at the door one day he was confronted by a hawker, and before he could get out a refusal to purchase anything, he was met by a request to buy a new edition of his notice at one shilling, "guaranteed to last for ever."

It is when he descends to being colloquial that the street vendor is at his best, and the following sample from F. L. Jennings' *In London's Shadows*, and culled in Petticoat Lane, would be hard to beat. The vendor was an earthenware merchant and his address ran as follows. "Wal I'm blowed. You're a kind lot of people I must say. I'll have ter come rahnd ter tea an' see that yer uses 'em. I'll give hanybody a hones' pahnd if tbe'y're not wot I says they are. Come on an' feel 'em. Don't stan' there gawkin' like bloomin' owls. I ain't Moses. Me fice's orlright ain't it Ted? Yus, I thought so. If some of yer 'ad got a fice like mine yer could get another five bob on yer wages. My ole woman says it's the best fice she ever kissed, so it makes me feel quite cocky. 'Ere Ma touch 'em. That's right. They won't snap when yer look at 'em like some of them German goods they're a-sellin' over there. Ought to be 'ung fer it. Now, wot did I tell yer? Gor strike me pink wot d'yer want, the old Duchess as well. She's aht. Gorn to the mothers' meeting. Ah, ah, wot 'ave we 'ere? Oh, my lord, look at these! George, George, run yer blighter! Wot a

lively sight, eh? Ain't they grand? Look at that cup and saucer Pure china The picture comes right through to the other side Nah, don' all shout at once I know you'll 'ave 'em, and when they've gorn you'll be creepin' up ter me an' saying, 'Oh, Mr Tidler, why didn't yer say they're so good' Look, yer carn't scrape it orf! The paint won't fall inter the tea and add ter the flavour Not ser likely It's sahnd every bit of it 'Ark at it! Did ye 'ear the ring? I'm not a job merchant I don't buy much I don't I wouldn't be 'ere ter-day if I did I'm an earthenware merchant I am If yer wants rubbish then fer Gawd's sake get ahrt of it Put it dahn Too cheap, Ted Don't let 'em 'ave it Well, let's go to the 'igh clarse department Oh wot plates! Our 'ouse is a-decorated wiv 'em 'Ere, let's see who's got some money A 'arf dozen for twelve bob wiv the gold rim as well No, by crikey, wot yer standing there for then? 'Ere ten bob then I should say so That's unparalysed yer, 'as it? By Ginger, sold, sold, sold to a Lord, Lord Bloomin' Blimey"

The personal element enters very largely into these exhortations Here is another example from the same source "What clocks, I say what clocks Better'n some people's dials Listen Talk about an alarm Nice and clurrupey, ain't it? It's the early bird that catches the worm with these 'cre clocks You

will want to put yer socks on when this starts a buzzing. It's nice ter get up in the mornin' only when yer got one of these 'ere in yer bedroom. Wot beauties! See yer fice in 'em. Ye don't mind if I tell yer a bit o' scandal, do yer? Well, I'm keeping another man's daughter. Yus, the hones' trufe. I was married at eight o'clock last Toosday morning and, by gum, that clock got me aht o' bed in time I can tell yer. 'Ere, three and a tanner each. That's the stuff. I like English people to deal wiv."

These street tradesmen still possess a dignity in spite of their lowly avocation and woe be to the person who attempts to infringe it or in any way to decry the goods they are offering for sale. "Not quite the fing, ain't it?" said the proprietor of a coffee stall to a complaining customer, "Well, it ain't much of a taxi ride to the Ritz. Go and try a kipper there."

An old lady gazed disparagingly at the coster's barrow, fingered some of the fruit, and then said, "Yes, they're not bad gooseberries, but they're very dirty." "Dirty," came the indignant reply, "D'ye think I can wash 'em and part their bloomin' 'air down the middle for tuppence a pahnd these 'ard times?"

Very much on his dignity, too, was the strong man preparing to give his performance in a suburban street. "Nah then, ladies and gents,



your kind appreciation if you please " Then taking a look at his cap in which the audience were invited to place their contributions, "You shorely don't expect a West End performer to kill 'isself in the subbubs for fourpence!"

The street trader has a liking for terms and expressions normally only used in the higher ranks of commerce Two kerb merchants were selling bananas side by side, but while one charged at the rate of two a penny, the other was undercutting by retailing at three a penny "Now then, Mr Three a penny," said the former at length, "Wot d'yer mean by knocking the bottom out of the blinkin' market?" Strictly on his dignity, also, was the pavement artist who, when asked by a charitably inclined lady, "Didn't I give you something in High Street this morning?" replied, "Yus, lady, I've got a branch establishment there"

The best example of an attempt to raise a humble trade to a high level is that of the merchant who sold peanuts outside the Bank of England He was approached by a brother coster who made enquiries as to how trade was going "Not so dusty," said the peanut merchant "Good" said the other glad to hear it "Then you can afford to lend me 'arf a dollar" At this request the knight of the nuts shook his head sorrowfully "Sorry mate, he replied, 'but it can't be done I'm bound by an agreement with the Bank of England all

written down and signed. They mustn't sell pea-nuts and I won't lend money."

Bearing out this aspiration for higher things some of these merchants display a cuteness that would do credit to a Napoleon of finance. One of the fraternity was selling boat-race favours. "'Ere y'are, lidy," he shouted, "boat-race favours penny each." The old lady was, however, rather deaf, and asked, "How much are they?" "Twopence, lidy," was the prompt reply.

It often happens that the trader's ready wit will effect a sale where his customary blandishments have failed. "Buy a flower, sir," pleaded one merchant. "No," was the curt reply. "'Ave one for your sweetheart?" "I haven't a sweetheart." "Well, one for your wife, then." "I'm not married." "Well, then," came the final and convincing appeal, "Buy the whole blinkin' lot to celebrate your luck."

The man with the basket had tried hard to effect a sale, but with no success. "I don't want no buttons nor no laces," said the housewife decisively, as she prepared to shut the door. "'Arf a mo', lidy," came the reply. "'Ere's the very thing you want, 'Grammar for Beginners', sixpence."

A Yankee purchased a penny article from a street vendor. After examining it for a moment or two the man from the States said, "A penny! Wal, I guess I should have had to pay sixpence

for this lil'l article in old New York " "Don't let that worry you, guv'nor," was the reply, "Pay yer sixpence and think y're at home"

There are occasions, however, when this ready wit has the effect of cancelling all hope of any business "Any beer bottles, lidy?" asked the man with the barrow of the sour looking lady of the house "Do I look as if I drank beer?" was the acid reply "Sorry ldy," said the ready witted hawker, "Any vinegar bottles?"

The most pleasing characteristic of the kerb merchants is their sympathy, though sometimes, through ignorance, this is slightly out of place or ill timed 'I shall want a large quantity of flowers next week for my daughter s coming out," said a lady to a flower-girl from whom she invariably made her purchases "Yes, mum," was the reply, 'an' you shall have the very best for her, pore dear Wot was she put in for?"

As a general rule hawkers and kerb merchants are careful in choosing their customers but it sometimes happens that in excess of zeal they fail to be as polite as the occasion requires. "Elp a poor woman, lidy," pleaded a vendor of clothes props to a stately dowager who was making a round of calls in a West End square "Eightpence each or two for a shilling" To this offer there was no reply "Let ye 'ave two

for tenpence if you carry 'em 'ome yourself" came the further offer. No more successful was the street photographer who hailed a Guards' officer in uniform, who was walking with his wife. "'Ere y'are, sir. The very latest in 'igh class snapshots. Both yer heads on one card enclosed in a 'eart for a tanner."

More undiplomatic still, if not asking for trouble, was the wire-puzzle merchant who approached a broken-down motor cyclist, whose machine was all in pieces, with the entreaty, "Buy a puzzle, sir?" or the one who asked a broken-down, stranded and hope-abandoned motorist, "What about a few primrose roots, guvnor?"

When the merchant shows such want of tact the reply he sometimes gets is not to his liking. On a typical spring evening with an east wind blowing and the sleet coming down thickly, a tired business man hurried along to catch his train. "Snowdrops, sir?" said a flower merchant pushing a bunch of the flowers in front of him. "I always knew it did," said the prospective customer as he hurried on his way.

A good housewife had been constantly interrupted in her spring cleaning and her temper broke down when she had to answer the door to yet another hawker. "I don't want anything to-day," she snapped. "Can't I sell you some of this spot remover?" persisted the salesman,

"It's really wonderful. There is nothing that you cannot remove with it. Would you like a test?" "Yes," came the biting reply, "Remove yourself with it!"

Lastly comes the humour born of the ever constant strife that goes on between the police and those whom circumstances drive to earn their living in the market of the streets. Few, outside those who have experienced it, realise the pathos in the command "Move on there." It is a pretty hopeless job for the owners of fruit barrows in the City to keep on the move while selling from the barrow, weighing up with their hands and pushing the barrow with their knees, but even that is simplicity itself compared to the plight of the artist vainly trying to free himself after being hopelessly tied up by a bluejacket, who, in the midst of his fruitless struggles, is ordered by a policeman to "Get a move on." Sympathy, too, must go out to the Italian organ grinder who busy on his lawful occasions in a Mayfair street is ordered by a policeman to "Get a move on, Tarzan. This ain't a monkey neighbourhood."

But, as usual in this life, sooner or later the victory goes to the other side, as in the case of the hawker who had just received a very strongly worded caution from a policeman. Smarting under the seeming injustice, and evidently with the language of the army still in

his mind, he retaliated with, "Blimey, you ain't 'arf got a muzzle velocity."

The aristocracy of street musicians is to be found in the street bands. In pre-war days these hailed almost entirely from the Fatherland, and were commonly known as "German bands". They were characterised by their method of attack, which was explosive, a kind of shock attack by storm troops with trombone, bassoon and drum all in full blast. Although not exactly musical it evidently attained the desired effect, as within a few seconds of opening outside any house the performers were quickly bribed to carry their operations into the next street.

The German bands disappeared in 1914 and since the war their place has been taken by so-called ex-service bands. If the performers are ex-army bandsmen it is quite easy to understand why we won the war. Nothing could stand up against them. In many cases they have blossomed into a uniform, or at least a partial one, though the drummer still usually turns out in mufti. This is perhaps due to the fact that he is constantly changed, a supposition which his performance on the instrument would appear to justify.

The kind of music that such bands produce is illustrated by the story of one the members of which had just finished a selection, more noticeable for its vigour than its harmony, and were

taking a rest before starting on another spasm. At that moment the trombonist leaned over and said to his neighbour, "What's the next one?" "'The Maiden's Prayer,'" was the reply. "'Maiden's Prayer' be blowed," said the trombonist, "that's what I've just been playing."

Next in the street musicians' social scale comes the organ grinder, and following him the performers on various instruments, culminating in the democratic tin whistle. The popularity of the piano-organ appears to lie in the fact that it plays everything as a jig from the "March of the Priests" down to "Rock of Ages", while the little trills and ornamental bits that are introduced give an effect and a piquancy never imagined by the composer. The largesse collected by these performers, as in the case of the bands, is usually given as a bribe to the offender to go into the next street. An Italian organ-grinder, appearing before the magistrate for some breach of a bye-law, was asked what were his weekly earnings. "Tree pounds," was the reply. "What!" said the astonished cadi, "three pounds a week for grinding an organ?" "No, no," replied the truthful Italian, "tree pound for de stoppa and go away."

The street performer, humble and mechanical as his occupation may be, is proud of his profession and will usually describe himself as "an artist" or an "organist". When one of the brotherhood found himself before a magistrate

A performer was wheezing out "Annie Laurie" and had just come to the line "But for bonny Ann-ann-ann-eee Laurie I'd lay me doon and dee" "For Heaven's sake bring Mrs Annie Laurie," said an unsympathetic listener

Nor has the street singer, usually, very clear ideas as to the suitability of time and place. A street singer who stood in the door of a public house looked longingly at the great array of bottles behind the counter, and finally burst out into the pathetic strains of "Sweet spirit 'ear my prayer"

A large crowd had assembled outside a London church to witness a swagger wedding. An itinerant vocalist saw his chance and started to entertain the waiting crowd. Unfortunately at the moment the bridegroom drove up he broke forth into the old song, so long the favourite of moral and temperance societies, "Have courage, my boy, to say 'No' "

Belonging to a class which has now disappeared from our streets, and one whose absence cannot be deplored, was 'the chaunter'. He was usually brought into evidence by some sensational murder, and he stood in the gutter, often within five minutes of an execution offering "the last dying speech and confession" for the sum of one penny, or, when the murder was particularly atrocious, twopence. The confession often originated in the brain of the writer of it is



balderdash, while, if authentic, it usually was a simple statement that the culprit was sorry to find himself in his present position. Fortunately the present system, under which no information is given as to whether or not a confession has been made, has put an end to this gruesome trade, and its one time customers are left to get what satisfaction they can from the articles published in certain papers and purporting to be written by close relatives of the executed man.

Another street occupation rapidly passing into the ranks of "the things that have been" is that of pavement artist. No longer does the picture of the Prime Minister, or the slab of salmon on a dish draw the pence, but a cold and inartistic world passes them by and fails to produce the one time largesse. One artist realising this followed the theatrical custom and gave a grand farewell performance. This took the form of putting in the forefront of his pictures a board on which was written the following verse

*My pictures you no more will see  
Street artists call them boards  
They really were not done by me,  
They really were a fraud  
And now I choose another way  
To earn an honest crust  
I write this not because I can,  
But just because I must*

he was asked his occupation "I'm an organist," was the reply "But how can a man with such a God given talent as yours be out of a job?" continued the magistrate "My monkey died," was the convincing reply

Owing to the ease with which its details may be acquired organ grinding is now a very much over crowded trade, and if business is to be done it is essential to employ some additional attraction or appeal In one instance cited in F L Jennings', *In London's Shadows* this was achieved as follows After playing two or three selections the performer would advance into the middle of the road and harangue his audience as follows "Ladies and gentlemen You've just 'eard me play my orgin I ain't a doin' it 'cause I like it but acause I 'as to I ain't no preacher, but I wants ter say ter yer that if yer 'elps a chap as is down then yer won't never forgit it It says in the ole Book that yer ter do to others as they do ter yer, and if yer 'elps a man on the road then yer ll 'elp yerself more I m an old soldier and can show my pipers to any of yer as wishes ter sec 'cm Pleasc spare a copper, ladies and gentlcmen, and I'll be obliged ter ycr Good luck ter yer "

Another, and even more humble performer, who saw the necessity in these days of competition for additional attraction was onc who stood by the kerb playing a concertina, while at his feet was a jamptot containing a few flowers

and a stalk or two of corn. The tune he was endeavouring to grind out was just recognisable as that to "We plough the fields and scatter", and the whole was intended to represent a harvest thanksgiving.

Last in the musical scale comes the street singer. As to how to become one of these we cannot do better than reproduce the advice given to the Rev. F. L. Jennings, the doss-house parson, by an old and experienced member of the guild. "Look 'ere, Darky," said this old graduate of the streets, "if yer really wants ter sing yer better show up a bit more. There's a bleedin' Salvation Army show up the road, go and pinch one of their 'ymn books and learn 'Abide with me'. When yer got that off there's 'nother 'll come in 'andy, 'Is there room for Mary there'. Get 'em orf and ye'll be some damn good. Blimey, fancy not knowing 'em! Yer not 'arf religious. I'll 'ave to take yer to chapel I can see."

The principal fault to be found with the street singer (beyond his lack of voice and his rendering), is the inappropriate tunes and words that he selects. What can be more absurd than to hear some unkempt, unwashed individual with a seven day old beard wheezing out:

"Long 'ave I grown to love yer,  
But if yer can't be mine  
Think of me sometimes, loved one,  
*If only fer Auld Lang Syne.*"

A performer was wheezing out "Annie Laurie" and had just come to the line "But for bonny Ann-ann-ann-eee Laurie I'd lay me doon and dee". "For Heaven's sake bring Mrs. Annie Laurie," said an unsympathetic listener.

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"My pictures you no more will see,  
 Street artists call them boards.  
 They really were not done by me,  
 They really were a fraud.  
 And now I choose another way  
 To earn an honest crust,  
 I write this not because I can,  
 But just because I must."

A pavement artist in Willesden once secured attention with the following notice. "Please give me a penny. Don't save them—what's the use? Lloyd George will have them if you do."

The best paying of the kerbstone trades is newspaper selling. "Of all the jobs taken in hand by the casual on the road," writes the Rev. F. L. Jennings, "give me newspaper selling. There is something stimulating and exciting about it. The newsvendor is the centre of interest and attraction. Oftentimes he is the most important person in the street. His piercing cries are thrilling, clamant and insistent. He encourages and depresses, he warms and inspires. He can turn a household into gloom or waft it to the skies. His calls record the pulse of human life, its plans, its doings, its hopes, its tragedies, its vices, its villainies, its smiles, its tears."

Everything, of course, depends upon the pitch, and only the best and most pushing sellers can hope to attain to the more valuable stands. On some of these the fortunate holder can earn as much as £5 or £6 a week, while it is a very poor stand that will not bring in at least 25 shillings.

The one qualification necessary to a successful vendor of the "Sick-Turty" or the "Allawin and prize" is ability to excite curiosity, and to do this the seller must be all things to all men. A mere recital of his wares is of no use, he must, at all costs, attract attention by turning

the commonplace into the abnormal. The vendor who can do this during the silly season, when the papers contain nothing of interest, is the one who makes good, to this school belonging the newsboy who, during the serious illness of the late King Edward, when Prince of Wales drew attention to himself and his wares by shouting, "Shields' Gazette, Shields' Gazette Prince o' Wales no deed yet."

It is really remarkable how some of these lads will vary their call to suit probable customers. In the midst of shouting "All the winners" one of them noticed a clergyman approaching. Hurriedly he scanned the headlines to find something appropriate to the clerical profession. He was apparently successful, for, as the clergyman reached him, he thrust the paper under his nose at the same time crying out, "Piper? Special Edishun 'Orrible fire in Jerusalem Piper, parson?"

In another instance papers were going badly and something novel was necessary to arouse interest. A brilliant idea struck the newsboy. "Great Swindle," he shouted, "Sixty victims." Eagerly his paper was purchased by the next person passing, after which the boy resumed his cry with one slight variation, "Great Swindle Sixty-one victims."

Sometimes, however, his zeal carries him a little too far, as in the case of the boy who, coming across the heading "Storm news from

America", announced to the world, "Another big tornado sunk." An even more amusing instance was that of the lad, who, seeing the headline, "Sudden death of Mr. X, Chief Whip," proceeded to inform the passers-by of the "sudden death of a well-known jockey".



## CHAPTER VII

### STREET ORATORS

No class, among all the contributors to the humour of daily life is, in proportion to its numbers, so prolific as that of the street corner or park orator. Generally, however, the street orator is an unconscious humorist. He is an example of self-conceit run to extreme. In his own opinion he brings a heaven sent message, and, in his own eyes, he is not so much a disciple as an original voice crying, at present, in the wilderness, but one that will some day shake the world to its very foundations. He enjoys a faith that *may* move mountains, but which in these unbelieving days doesn't even fill the collection box.

The speeches of such folk are, as a rule, largely made up of tags collected from here and there and joined together by little original bits always recognisable from their lapse into bad grammar or into the language of the streets. Commonplaces are uttered with the air of a Solomon, while fallacies that have been exploded for hundreds of years are brought out with an air of newly discovered truths. 'I never go to Hyde Park,' said one writer, "and

America", announced to the world, "Another big tornado sunk." An even more amusing instance was that of the lad, who, seeing the headline, "Sudden death of Mr. X, Chief Whip," proceeded to inform the passers-by of the "sudden death of a well-known jockey".

Another speaker made out what he considered an unanswerable case, but at the same time he was anxious to impress upon his audience that he was essentially a fair minded man and could look at both sides of the question "I am quite open to conviction," he finally declaimed, "but I should like to see the man who could convince me"

Not quite so certain was the orator who, asked by a voice in the crowd for his opinion on a certain point, cautiously replied as follows "Well, some say this and some say that, but what I say is that there's no knowing and no telling, and, (at this point his voice rose in triumph) mark my words, I'm right"

The great charm of some of these orators lies in their delightful illogicality A man with advanced views had talked for some twenty minutes on the hardships of a minority held down and crushed by a powerful and overwhelming majority "But, mark my words," he concluded, "the time is coming when every man will do what he likes, and if he doesn't he'll be made to"

Running the illogical man closely for pride of place as a humorist is the orator who turns out his metaphors somewhat in the form of an Irish stew "Ladies 'n gen'lemen," said one individual of this type in an attempt to finish in a dramatic manner, "I have now put the whole matter before you and you have, in a

manner o' speaking, the 'ole kettle o' fish in a nutshell."

A very common mistake made by this class of orator is his belief that he may give emphasis to his remarks by asking questions of his audience to which he intends to give the answer himself; in only too many cases before he can do this the reply, and that usually shattering in its effect, comes from one of his audience of a different school of thought. "What we want," said the speaker, "is men with convictions, and where shall we find them?" "In jail, guv'nor," came the convincing reply.

An evangelist had been addressing the crowd on the great value of love and friendship. Finally he put the question, "Now I ask you in the time of trial what brings us the greatest comfort?" only to get from one who knew the answer, "An acquittal, guv'nor."

Another individual attempting to push a religion of his own manufacture, had spoken for some twenty minutes, during which time he had exposed the shortcomings of every other creed. At length he proposed to get down, but before doing so announced that he would be pleased to answer any question, fully convinced that his words must have dispelled all doubt in the minds of his hearers. A low-brow took advantage of his offer. "Do you know a good cure for warts?" he asked.

"You say I am out of order," said a speaker

indignantly, "then perhaps you will please tell me in what way I am out of order?" "I'm afraid I can't," said the mild man in the audience, "You should ask a vet"

If Nature has plagued us with the man who insists upon being heard it has provided an antidote in the Voice, that so often with a telling remark puts an end to a wearisome discourse "We must get rid of Socialism, Bolshevism, Communism and Anarchism," shouted the perfervid orator "While you're about it, guv'nor, chuck in rheumatism," shouted a sufferer in the audience

"Two years ago, my friends," said an advocate of some quaint form of self-healing, "I was a physical wreck, 'orrible to behold Now I'm agoing to tell you what wrought this wonderful change in me" 'Wot change?" queried one of the audience, before the meeting broke up in disorder

"Yes," said the gentleman on the upturned soap box "I can talk to you as one of yourselves I'm not one of the leisured classes I'm a self-made man, that's what I am" "Lumme," came the Voice, "you knocked off work a bit too soon, mister"

Sometimes these comments, besides putting an end to a tiresome speech, will take us deep into the heart of the things that are "A man who gives in when he is wrong," said one speaker, "is a wise man, but he who gives in

when he is right is " "Married," said a sad looking member of the crowd

A lady with more voice than either charm or eloquence asked "Is there any man here who would let his wife be slandered and say nothing?" "I would," said a voice "What," said the astonished speaker, "Do you mean to say that you would stand by and let your wife be slandered?" "Oh," said the voice with disappointment, "I'm sorry I thought you said slaughtered "

Many of these self-appointed teachers show little logic in their remarks, as we have seen, this seems especially the case where their subject is a religious one One such individual in introducing his attack on all forms of belief, commenced his remarks with, "I'm an atheist, thank God ' Another, who had occupied at least half an hour in a virulent attack on Christianity, concluded by wishing his audience "Good night, God bless you," and then, endeavouring to recall his mistake, he added, "to use a vulgar expression "

An individual, whose conceit was greater than his general knowledge, was endeavouring to explain that the various miracles recorded in the Old Testament were only due to natural causes In illustration of this he put forward the theory that the crossing of the Red Sea could be explained by the fact that the waters suddenly froze At this point a questioner

suggested that the Red sea, being nearly under the equator, was never known to freeze. The speaker was, however, equal to the occasion. "If the gent who has asked me this question," he said, "knew half as much about Scripture and the geography of the country as he pretends to, he would know that this event which I have explained happened thousands and thousands of years ago. Yes, sir, thousands of years before the age of geographies and before there was any equator. I think, ladies and gents, I have answered that question completely."

The same ignorance only too often exhibits itself in the political speaker. "It's knowledge we want," declaimed one. "Ask the avridge man when Magna Charta was King of England and he can't tell you."

The speaker who adopts the patriotic line is no more free from criticism than his colleagues. "I was born an Englishman," declaimed one, "and I am proud of it. England is the greatest nation in the world, and I hope I shall live and die an Englishman." "Man, man," said a Scot in his audience, "hae ye no ambeetion?"

The most common fault of the street-orators is that usually they talk too long; but in these cases it is no great while before the interrupter gets in a telling shot. A speaker had been going on for a considerable time when there came a voice from the back, "Do you believe in early closing?" "Certainly I do," was the reply.

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Many of these self-appointed teachers little logic in their remarks; as we have this seems especially the case where their is a religious one. One such individual inducing his attack on all forms of belief menced his remarks with, “I’m an : thank God.” Another, who had occup least half an hour in a virulent atte Christianity, concluded by wishing his a “Good night, God bless you,” and the deavoursing to recall his mistake, he add use a vulgar expression.”

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suggested that the Red sea, being nearly under the equator, was never known to freeze. The speaker was, however, equal to the occasion. "If the gent who has asked me this question," he said, "knew half as much about Scripture and the geography of the country as he pretends to, he would know that this event which I have explained happened thousands and thousands of years ago. Yes, sir, thousands of years before the age of geographies and before there was any equator. I think, ladies and gents, I have answered that question completely."

The same ignorance only too often exhibits itself in the political speaker. "It's knowledge we want," declaimed one. "Ask the avridge man when Magna Charta was King of England and he can't tell you."

The speaker who adopts the patriotic line is no more free from criticism than his colleagues. "I was born an Englishman," declaimed one, "and I am proud of it. England is the greatest nation in the world, and I hope I shall live and die an Englishman." "Man, man," said a Scot in his audience, "hae ye no ambection?"

The most common fault of the street-orators is that usually they talk too long, but in these cases it is no great while before the interrupter gets in a telling shot. A speaker had been going on for a considerable time when there came a voice from the back, "Do you believe in early closing?" "Certainly I do," was the reply.

"Then why don't you shut up?" was the smashing retort.

"The question I put to myself is this," said one long-winded one. "Why am I here this evening?" "Ask me another," replied a weary voice.

The speaker was boring and the restive audience began to argue among themselves. "There is so much interruption," complained the orator, "that I can hardly hear myself speak." "Cheer up, guv'nor," said one of his audience, "you ain't missing much."

On the other hand the interrupter sometimes gets a bad time. One speaker, constantly interrupted, at length stopped his main argument and said, "Some years ago while I was speaking a young man who was just in front of me kept laughing, chattering and making faces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. Afterwards I was told I had made a ghastly mistake as the poor fellow was an idiot. Since then I have always been afraid to tell off interrupters."

In spite of the many trials and difficulties he encounters the true street or park orator is rarely ever depressed. He is an optimist to the backbone. For him, two children, a nursemaid with pram and one old gentleman, will constitute an audience, and his bosom will swell with pride when at the close his comrade, in moving a vote of thanks, announces that the

speaker "has more than come up to our most sanguinary expectations."

It does not always follow, however, that his eloquence is properly appreciated within the family circle. "I was outspoken at the meeting," announced Mr. Longwind on his arrival home. "Was you?" asked his wife with interest, "Who outspoke you?"

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE POLICE

IN few states of life have conditions of work and service so altered in recent years as in that of the police; the change has had the effect of entirely altering the humour ascribed to the Force. At one time two of the stock jokes of the cheaper comic papers were the size of the policeman's feet and his partiality for the cook who could turn out a good rabbit-pie, but now with his entry into night clubs and those select haunts where the Bright Young People congregate they refer more to his position as connoisseur of men's wear. "In the old days," writes A. P. Garland in *Says Sergeant Murphy*, "they selected policemen by bulk and the thickness of their skulls. A man was first tested for height and weight, and if they were all right he had to have his cranium tested by repeated blows with a heavy blunt instrument. If the instrument cracked first the lad was taken on. If not, no. And as long as he was able to write down in his notebook the name of the fellah he'd manhandled, or mark with a cross on a map the spot where the dog bit the district councillor, nobody cared a row of pins

if he thought caviar an Hungarian composer and Kipling a new way of dressing women's hair.

"But we've grown civilised since then and the copper of to-day has to be drawn from the educated classes if he is to hold on to his job.

"There's the chaps in the West End that raid the night clubs and hotels. Every wan of them has to pass a stiff examination in men's fashions, and how many gussets go to a pair of pants, and which Saville Row tailor is soundest on Chesterfield overcoats. And if a constable is unable to say off-hand whether a lounge suit with bowler or a mornin' coat with turned-up trousers is *dee regoor* for a statutory meeting of creditors he is as likely as not to find himself regulating the queues outside an East End craitch."

The one-time idea that the policeman must, of necessity, have large hands and feet is illustrated by the story of the policeman virtuously indignant with the driver of a four-wheeler who had taken no notice of his signal to pull up. "Now then, four-wheeler," he demanded, "Why couldn't you pull up sooner? Didn't you see me 'old up my 'and?" "Well, constable," said the cabby in his most dulcet accents, "I did see a kind o' shadder pass acrost the sky, but my old 'orse he shied at your feet."

A policeman had turned into the yard at Charing Cross to have his boots cleaned. The

boy with the box looked at the pedal extremities in astonishment, and then, turning to a friend, said, "Charley; go home and get me some more blacking and tell mother I shall be late for supper."

A very large policeman, it was recently recorded in the Press, was standing at the edge of the pavement and gazing across the empty roadway. At that moment a solitary lorry came slowly along close to the kerb, but the driver, observing the policeman, looked significantly at his feet and then turned out into the middle of the road, only returning to the kerb when the guardian of the law was left safely behind.

At the present time police force humour usually arises from those cases where an officer has to deal with gentlemen who have lingered too long in places of refreshment, or he has to answer the quaint questions put to him by the type of person who considers a policeman to be an encyclopaedia. A slightly sober old gentleman making his way home, was wobbling about the road oblivious of the traffic. "Here," said the kindly X 1, "come along old man, walk on the pavement." "Pavement," said the wobbler with indignation, "Who do you take me for, Blondin?"

A football fan had come up for the Cup Final and as his particular team had lost, he had made a fairly successful effort to drown his sorrows. Having fallen asleep in a doorway

he was awakened in the early hours of the morning by the flash of a constable's torch in his face. "Good lor," he murmured as he settled himself once more to repose, "just our luck. Our chaps'll never win playing against a strong sun like that."

A constable, making his midnight round, was astonished to come across an elderly individual crawling along the road on his hands and knees. "What are you doing that for?" he enquired, "surely it isn't necessary to go home in that manner?" "Well," said the recumbent one looking up, "it ain't (hic) 'xactly necessary, hut it's a very wise precaution."

Another watchful custodian of the peace discovered an individual in very much disordered evening dress zig-zagging his way home at the wicked hour of 3 a.m. "Here," said the constable, "where are you going?" "To a lecture," replied the culprit in the tone of one who had just received a life sentence.

An old country farmer, having come up for the week-end to a show at the Agricultural Hall, had enjoyed himself only too well, and was gathered in by a friendly policeman. "What do you think I'll get?" he enquired on arrival at the police station. "Probably fined ten bob," said the constable. "But I've no money left!" "Well in that case it will be seven days." "Ah," said the old man triumphantly, "that's where I've got you. I got to go back on Monday."

There was no question of liquor in the case of the Scotsman who was observed by a constable to be walking up and down Oxford Street with a large piece of bread in his hand "What do you want that bread for?" asked the policeman "Weel," replied the Scot, "I'm looking for the traffic jam"

A constable was prosecuting a man for being in unlawful possession of a rabbit, the presumption being that he had stolen it from some shop The rabbit was duly produced in court "Is this the rabbit?" asked the magistrate "Well no, sir," replied the constable, "but it's one exactly like it I thought the other wouldn't keep, so my wife made a pie of it and got a fresh one from the poulterer's"

A man, before that wise and witty magistrate, the late Mr Plowden, was charged with disorderly conduct According to the policeman's evidence he heard noises about midnight, and subsequently found the prisoner and another man larking about and laughing "Why should they not laugh?" asked Mr Plowden "It was after midnight and a very respectable neighbourhood," was the reply "Can you alter the character of a neighbourhood by laughing?" demanded Mr Plowden "Do you ever laugh? Are you a constable without a smile?" And then, turning to the prisoner, he added, "Laugh as long as you can in this world You are discharged."



Of the quaint questions sometimes asked the Force, the palm is surely held by that of the countryman who, going up to a policeman on duty in Lincoln's Inn Fields, addressed him as follows "Excuse me I've got an appointment with a chap in this square but I've lost his name and address However, you'll be able to put me right because 'e's a lawyer, 'e is "

A policeman on point duty at a very busy crossing was making valiant efforts to cope with the constant stream of traffic when he was approached by a dear old lady evidently in need of his services Stopping the traffic for a moment he enquired bow he could assist her "Pardon me, constable," was the reply, "but have you seen a silk handkerchief marked 'Mary' anywhere around? I've just dropped mine "

The standard of general education among the police is now very high a fact of which every opportunity is taken by visitors, and, according to one writer on the Force, he is even expected to be able to explain to a tourist from Texas that the Golden Cross Hotel is early Perpendicular and not late Woolworth architecture In an endeavour to ascertain the extent of such knowledge, C G Harper in *More Queer Things about London*, tells a story of how he once accosted a City policeman with the words "Civis Romanus sum " "Straight along Queen Street, cross Cheapside into King Street, and

you'll see it in front of you," was the answer he received without a moment's hesitation. Subsequently he tried another constable with the same tag only to get the cryptic answer, "Some are, some ain't."

It is good to discover that the officer's services as a friend of all the world are sometimes properly recognised and appreciated. A west country farmer found, shortly after arriving in London, that he had lost his wallet and he accordingly reported the matter at the nearest police station. "You may rest assured," said the officer on duty reassuringly, "that we shall leave no stone unturned in our endeavour to find it." The next day, while taking a stroll, the farmer came across a place where street excavations were in progress in connection with some repairs to the telephone. "By Jove these police do keep their word," he remarked appreciatively.

There are occasions when the ubiquity of the Force is recognised and used very much to personal advantage. A Scotsman arriving at Euston at noon hailed a taxi and asked to be driven to Waterloo, as he wished to catch the four o'clock train from that station. The taxi man scented a greenhorn and drove around for three hours and three quarters before depositing his fare at Waterloo. Getting out the Scotsman walked up to a policeman and asked, "What's the fare from Euston?" "Three shillings," was the reply. "Here," said the canny one handing

over the exact amount, "will you kindly settle with the cabby for me while I get my ticket?"

When the questions put to them are more than usually idiotic, or the officer's temper has been strained by a long spell of traffic control, it sometimes happens that his reply is a little caustic "Policeman," said a very agitated and vinegary old maid, "I call on you to arrest that man He walked up to me and said I was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen " "Very good, mum," said the P C calmly, "what do you wish me to charge him with? Insanity? "

"Why do you carry white gloves?" asked an inquisitive old lady of the policeman on point duty "To show we've got 'em, ma'am," was the reply "And why do you have a strap on your helmet?" was the next query "To rest my jaw on when it's grown tired with answering silly questions," snapped the constable

An infuriated musician of the long haired variety rushed up to a City policeman on point duty "I want you to do something to that boy over there," he shrieked "He asked me what the time was, so I put down my violin case, unbuttoned my overcoat, took out my watch and told him it was ten minutes to three 'Right,' he said, 'then at three o'clock get your 'air cut' " "Well," said the fed up constable, "you've got nothing to worry about You're alright, you've got seven minutes yet "

A constable had been worried with questions

all day and had arrived at the end of his patience, when he was accosted by a very fat old dowager "Can you see me across the street?" she asked "Madam," was the reply, "I could see you six blocks away"

The facility with which our friend will find a way out of a difficulty must not be forgotten indeed he goes so far in this direction that a cynic has declared him to be in the case of a street row "a never present help in time of trouble" "If you were single-handed and were ordered to disperse a mob what would you do?" asked an inspector of a young constable "Pass round the hat, sir," was the prompt reply.

A rough looking customer entered a tram, but once inside he refused to pay his fare At the next stop the conductor signalled a policeman "This man will not pay his fare," he said, "so I want you to remove him" The constable took a good look at the man "I'll pay his fare myself," he calmly said

The lady driver of a car had been pulled up for speeding Out came the note book "Your name, please," was the first question "Desiree Stephanie St John Delagarde Montmorency," replied the fair one The notebook was closed with a snap and, "Look here, miss," said the constable, "I'll give you one more chance and don't you do it again"

A constable coming off duty reported that a horse had fallen down dead in Nebuchadnezzar

Street "All right," said the inspector, "make out the report and I'll look at it directly" A moment or two later he observed the constable making for the door "Where are you off to?" he enquired "Going to pull that old horse round into High Street," was the reply

A very pretty young lady who had been pulled up for speeding knew the power of her charms, she turned the full battery of her brown eyes on the officer, at the same time saying plaintively, "You surely won't take this matter any further?" The policeman was, however, adamant "It's no good, miss," he explained, "I've been specially selected for this job because I'm a woman hater"

Although this ability to get out of a difficulty is such a common feature of the Force there are occasions when the policeman blunders badly A somewhat raw member recruited from Scotland was on duty at a big civic function with orders that only certain high dignitaries were allowed to enter through the door he was guarding The first person to arrive was a well-known member of the Cabinet "I canna let ye in here," said the policeman sternly "But I'm a Cabinet Minister," expostulated the other "I dinna care," was the stern reply "I canna let ye in even if you're a Presbyterian minister"

"Look, officer," said an excited motorist, "I drove up to this parking place and left my car for five minutes and while I was away someone

all day and had arrived at the end of his patience, when he was accosted by a very fat old dowager. "Can you see me across the street?" she asked. "Madam," was the reply, "I could see you six blocks away."

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"Look, officer," said an excited motorist, "I drove up to this parking place and left my car for five minutes and while I was away someone

stole the magneto " "Indeed, sir," replied the constable producing his note book "but are you prepared to swear that you had it when you arrived?"

An inspector was endeavouring to gain information regarding a robbery that had taken place on his beat from a very raw Irish constable "Did you notice any suspicious characters about the neighbourhood?" he asked "Shure," was the reply, "I saw but one man, an' I asked him what he was doing there at that time av night Sez 'e, 'I have no business here now but I expect to be opening a jewellery store very shortly' With that I sez to 'im, 'And its success I'm after wishing you '" "Yes," said the almost frenzied inspector, "and he did open a jeweller's store and stole about fifty rings and gold watches" "Did he, begorra?" replied the constable "Then he may have been a thief but he was no loiar "

The most fruitful place for discovery of the constable's blunders is the witness box "Did you come across any coincidence?" asked the defending lawyer "Yes I did," replied the constable, "but I forgot to put it down in my note book "

"Did he shoot the dog with malice aforethought?" asked the magistrate "No, he had no mallet, he shot it with a gun "

"He's a bad lot, yer washup," was the evidence of another constable, "He comes home



speechless drunk every night and uses abusive language."

"Did you warn the defendants that they must go away?" asked the magistrate. "Shure and I did sir," replied a son of Erin, "I said to them, 'If ye're after standing there ye'll have to move on'."

It will often be found, however, that in giving evidence the police are most meticulous, which, perhaps is due to the increased standard of education now required on admission to the Force. "Did you see me coming through the door?" asked the prisoner. "No," replied the constable, "I saw you coming through the doorway." What too, could have been more descriptive than the reply of the officer who, asked to describe a person, did it as follows. "He was a tall man, your worship, and he stepped as high as a blind dog in a wheatfield."

Although the duties of the police are already more varied than any other section of the community yet scarcely a day passes without some member of it being called upon to act in a new capacity. "Would you mind compelling me to move on?" said a wearied looking gentleman to the policeman on duty at the street corner. "Whatever for, sir?" said the astonished policeman. "Well, my wife has gone into Brown and Jones' Summer Sale and I promised to wait here for her, and I've been waiting three hours."

Mr. R E Corder tells a story of how it fell to the duty of a young constable who had just joined the Force to arrest a drunken mother, and at the same time to take charge of the baby. It was New Year's Eve, and people on their way to parties stopped to witness the sight of a young constable carrying a baby, holding up the drunken mother and endeavouring at the same time to entertain a little seven year old girl who ran along beside him asking questions. Amidst cries of "Papa" he finally reached the station, and next morning the mother, whose annual drunk it was, regained her liberty at the cost of forty shillings.

With such a varied chentèle as that with which the police have to deal it is only natural that the replies made to them by breakers of the law are often worth recording. "Look here," said a policeman to the driver of a car which he had pulled up. "You've got a nice little lot against you. Dangerous driving, disregarding signal, no driving licence, number plate obscured, no lights. Guess you've about collected the lot haven't you?" "No," said the occupant of the car calmly, "there's one thing you've missed. I pinched the car."

"Here," said the policeman, "what do you mean by racing through the town at such a dangerous rate?" "My brakes are out of order, sergeant," replied the young driver, "and I wanted to get home before there was an accident."

A suspicious character was given orders to move on. "Garn," he said in disgust, "if it wasn't for Edgar Wallace the likes of you would never have been heard of."

As often as not in any interchange of remarks between the preserver and the breaker of the law it is the former who scores. "What's this mean?" demanded one constable, "I find you on enclosed premises and there are your foot-prints leading right up to that window." "Quite so," replied the educated burglar, "I was leaving my footprints on the sands of time." "Oh, were you?" replied the guardian of the law, "Then come along to the Police Station and leave your finger-prints there."

The witness box sometimes leads to the discomfiture of the policeman since it gives his opponent a chance to get in a nasty smack. "What has brought you here this time?" asked the magistrate of an old offender. "Two police, yer honour." "Drunk, I suppose?" "Yes, sir, both of them."

A sailor made his appearance on a charge of D. and D. and the constable, of course, gave evidence. As the tale was unfolded the sailor grew more and more restless, until at length he interposed with, "It seems to me, mate, as 'ow you've hauled your jawing tacks aboard." "Silence," said the magistrate, "I cannot allow such language to be used." "Aye, aye, sir," replied the seaman, "I'll be mum. But I'm no

policeman. I never served me time to the trade of lying."

In a similar case, after the constable had told his tale, the defendant was called upon to say anything he might wish in his defence. His only reply was, "I'm no good as a liar. I ain't going to compete with him. He's got all the qualities of a winner."

As a result of the higher education of policemen, the Force now speaks like a collection of B.B.C. announcers; but the fact remains that the highest qualification any member can possess is a knowledge of the life of that section of the community among which his work lies. A little girl was brought to the police station and all attempts to find her name and address were in vain. She knew neither. At last one bright young constable solved the problem with the simple question, "Where does your mother get her gin?"

## CHAPTER IX

### TRAFFIC

IT is really remarkable how in a way Nature equalises matters. For many years now, the Ministry of Health, backed by the medical profession, have so striven in every possible way to lengthen our days, that had there been no compensating influence we should all have been pretty certain of becoming hale and hearty centenarians. This would have resulted in further unemployment, most men would have refused to retire from their jobs until somewhere in the region of the century, so that to equalise matters, and to reduce the expectation of life, the motor car and the motor cycle were introduced.

The old expression "the quick and the dead" now has a real meaning. Again history repeats itself in the lord of the car and the poor serf, the pedestrian, with no rights whatever, and existing only on the sufferance of his overlord. The many wrongs of this crushed and down trodden race have been expressed in verse

"I gaze across the street so wide  
I start I dart I squirm I glide  
I take my chances oh so slim—

I trust to eye and nerve and limb!  
 I scoot to right, I gallop through,  
 I'm here and there, I'm lost to view  
 My life, I know, hangs in the toss—  
 Another plunge—I am across!  
 Oh, give me pity, if you can,  
 I'm just a poor pedestrian "

The evolution of our modern transport clearly shows this historical repetition. With the introduction of hackney coaches in the seventeenth century a bitter cry went up to the heavens from the Thames watermen, who complained that for the future everyone would travel by coach and that their employment would be gone. Then in the years following 1830 came the turn of the coach proprietors who saw their livelihood menaced by the rise of the railways, while at the present day the railways are in fear and trembling at the rise of motor cars and motor coaches.

Transport difficulties have at all times resolved themselves into four groups, (1) Excessive speed, (2) Loitering, (3) Undue wear of roads, and (4) Carelessness. The first is the most recent, and has really only come into prominence with the high powered car, since when experience has shown that ass power is more plentiful than horse-power. Indeed the craze for speed has assumed such dimensions that it has been seriously suggested that the shooting of scorchers should be legalised, but the supporters of such suggestion lose sight of the fact that the practice

of scorching is so deep rooted that it will probably be continued after death. Although these persons usually have very good lights, they are normally not long livers. A young man who had taken his best girl out for a run in his new sports model, with the object of showing his skill as a driver, went through the town all out. The girl was entranced at the speed. "Dearest," she said, "this speed makes me feel that life is really and truly worth living." "Yes," agreed her escort, "and judging by the way the pedestrians hop out of our way they feel the same thing too."

Two young fellows, one of them a speed merchant, were discussing mutual friends. "Did you ever run across a fellow called Jenkins?" asked one. "I don't know," said the man with the car, "I never stop to find their names."

Unfortunately the girl motorist, too, has been bitten with the speed mania, and her views on the pedestrian are something like that of the sportsman on the bird. A young lady of this description found herself before the magistrate. "Do you realize," said the latter, "that this is the fifth person you've knocked down this year?" "Pardon me," put in the girl, "it's only the fourth. One of them was the same person twice."

In justification, however, to the speed merchant it should be pointed out that he is a liberal contributor to the local finances. As the magistrate said when looking at the long queue

summoned before the Bench for excessive speed, "This is going to be a fine day." Some authorities have gone so far as to suggest that the frenzied mania for speed of the road hog should be treated from a medical point of view and classed as swine fever.

Loitering in the streets would appear to have developed almost directly after the introduction of the horsed vehicle plying for hire. It was soon countered by an Act of Parliament which gave the police power to take into custody the driver of any public vehicle which obstructed the high road and refused to move on. The war opened when the police, exercising their newly acquired powers, pulled two omnibus drivers from their boxes and took them to the police station, where they were each fined forty shillings. Then came the turn of the drivers, for a few evenings after this incident an omnibus pulled up in Knightsbridge in such a position as to obstruct the traffic at a very busy time of day. An order by the policeman for the bus to move on was not obeyed, the driver only answering with a shake of his head; thereupon two policeman attempted to drag him from his box and take him into custody, only to find that he was chained and padlocked to it. The comedy was increased by the arrival of several other buses, the drivers of which joined in the merriment against the police, and when the latter went to arrest them they found them secured in the same manner.



and shortly after the non-progressive old act was amended.

It would appear that at this period the rules of the road were more honoured in the breach than in the observance. One omnibus proprietor, in the struggle for custom, went so far as to make all his drivers wear a wooden ring on each arm to which strings were attached running along each side of the vehicle and out at the back to the conductor. A passenger wishing to get off the bus would tell the conductor on which side of the street he wished to be put down, and, if it were the near side, the left string would be pulled, but if the off side then the conductor would pull the right string and the driver would make his way across the road and come to a halt on what is now the wrong side of the road.

Undue wear of the roads, a question so much under discussion at the present time, was even much more to the fore some hundred years ago when an attempt was made to put steam carriages on the road. It remained for Gloucestershire to show how to meet this innovation successfully. In 1831 a steam omnibus which ran the journey twice a day was placed on the road between Gloucester and Cheltenham. Soon came the inevitable cry from the local ratepayers about the undue wear on the roads, so, to put an end to the cause, the local authorities strewed the road with loose stones to a depth of nearly two feet, and in trying to pass over such an

obstacle the steam carriages were soon put out of action. When steam carriages were first placed in the London streets in 1833 the same plan was followed and was again successful.

Lastly comes the question of carelessness, and here it must be admitted that the pedestrian is equally if not more guilty than the motorist and the van driver. They do not appear to realise that the casual are apt to become casualties. It is only a slight transition from the jay walker to the Bird of Paradise. A frequent source of trouble is the pretty girl, and especially when Nature has been assisted by some of the recent changes in fashion. "Do you think short skirts are dangerous?" asked a lady of the young male owner of a sports model. "Yes, I do," was the reply. "To a girl's health?" "Oh, no, to a man's. I hit the kerb twice last week while I was watching them." Moreover it would appear that some young ladies are fully aware of their influence in this respect. A very pretty young girl, wearing a very short skirt, was going up the steps into a bank in London when a sudden breeze caused her to experience some difficulty with her attire. Two young men in a passing car watched the struggle with interest. Having at length brought the garment into subjection the girl turned in their direction and calmly remarked, "You have a lot more treats than your poor fathers ever had."

When, sooner or later, the inevitable accident

does occur then the reasons and excuses put forward by the erring one are sometimes rather quaint. A girl driver had lost her head, and, swerving across the street, had dashed into a plate-glass window. "Surely," said the policeman, "on such a wide street as this you could have done something to prevent such an accident?" "I did," said the girl emphatically, "I screamed as loud as ever I could."

One type of driver is never in doubt as to what to say. A small car, very badly driven, just avoided collision with a lorry. "My fault," said the driver of the baby, "All I can say is that I'm very very sorry." "Oh, that's all you can say is it?" replied the lorry driver, "Well, you just listen and hear what I can say about it."

A small car was on the point of driving up to a big London store when a taxi cut in and compelled the car to pull up short in order to avoid a collision. At that moment the store's commissionaire was talking to a gentleman, but on seeing what had happened he turned to the cabman and, snorting with indignation, rapped out, "Where the 'ell d'ye think you're coming to, you lousy swine!" Then turning back to the gentleman with whom he had been talking he added, "Some of these taxi-drivers seem to have forgotten that one of the first rules of life is manners make the man."

Admirable as is our traffic control, there are times when the volume of traffic is so great that

it looks as if no human power could clear it and that a long and tedious jam is inevitable. At such times, however, humour comes very much to the fore in the remarks of drivers who are held up. During a big block at the corner of Edgeware Road and Praed Street, a Rolls Royce, containing one old dowager of forbidding aspect, and driven by a haughty chauffeur in livery, drew up beside an almost time-expired old Ford. The driver of the Ford had, however, three pretty City girls as passengers, and evidently in self-justification he turned to the chauffeur to remark, "Well, old sport, you've got the better car, but I've got the better cargo."

It was a flag day and a block in the traffic gave one of the sellers her chance. She ran up to the grumpy looking driver of a luxurious car and asked, "Will you buy a flag for the hospital please?" "No," was the surly reply, "I contribute regularly to the hospital." "Oh," said the girl sweetly, "but we're collecting money to day, not pedestrians."

On occasions such as these the type of vehicle is often the occasion of the sally and nearly always the small car is the victim. In one block a baby car drew up behind a Rolls Royce and the driver of the former at once sounded his horn. At first the chauffeur of the Rolls Royce took no notice, but the noise continuing, he turned round and asked sympathetically, "Is mumme's darling wearying for its bottle?"

On the other hand the driver of the Baby Austin who was humped by a lorry was curt but decisive. "Coward," said the baby, and the reproof so took away the lorry driver's breath, that all he could manage to say was, "Sorry, chum."

In spite of the constant and ever flowing tide of traffic our police usually manage to grapple with the situation. "Isn't it wonderful how a single policeman can dam the flow of traffic!" said one old lady as she gazed at the traffic in Oxford Circus. "Yes, grannie," replied her grandson, "but you should hear the bus drivers."

risky to walk out there in the evening in case you fall over the edge."

Unfortunately this point of view sometimes brings him into conflict with those who are unfortunate enough to live outside the pale. A Londoner and a Scotsman, on one occasion, were having a somewhat heated argument on the respective merits of their two countries; the Londoner pointed out very forcibly the strength, power, extent and general world influence of London. "Yes," said the Scotsman finally, "You may have London as the capital, but dinna forget that we've got the capital."

On a similar occasion, however, the Cockney scored. Following an International football match a Londoner and a West countryman had struck up an acquaintance, and, after some conversation in which the former dilated at length on the advantages of living in the metropolis, the man from the West asked, "I suppose you were born and brought up in London?" "Yes," was the reply. "I thought so," said the Westerner, "you've got quite a Cockney accent." "Well," said the Londoner in turn, "where were you born?" "Worcester," replied the other. "I might have guessed it," came the quiet reply, "that accounts for your sauce."

The average Londoner will indignantly repudiate any suggestion that he is at all parochial or narrow-minded; for centuries he has preened

himself in the idea that he is the most broad-minded of men, and he will point proudly to the fact that nearly all great movements have had their beginning in the city. Further he will even sometimes generously admit that the metropolis does not claim to have a monopoly of the world's wisdom, and that it is possible for some portions to be found in the provinces, or even in other countries, though—and here comes the saving clause—it is exceptional, and most certainly would have been better developed if cradled in London. And, if he holds this opinion, who will blame him, when it is merely an example of the all absorbing power of London, a power in which it stands above all the other cities? "London," writes Thurston Hopkins in *This London*, "as a background is magnificent, it tones itself to every change in character or feature. It always strikes the right note, it has a spirit which seems to blend well with every emotion, with every taste, with every race. London never thrusts itself forward on the stranger, it never derides the crank or the clown, for in its tolerance it accepts the buffoon and the genius with the same measure of partiality. It finds a living and an audience for every class for every peculiarity of dress, of face of religion. It reduces or assimilates all who tarry long within its walls, it is a gigantic mill which grinds all the grain into the singular and inevitable meal which produces the Londoner."

Of the four outstanding characteristics of London language of former days given above the only one remaining to any great extent now is the quaint commentaries sometimes made on matters of the moment, a habit in which the Cockney has no rival. A small boy had partaken not wisely but too well of some apples purchased from a street hawker, and consequently suffered from a severe stomach ache. The boy returned to the merchant and accused him of selling goods unfit for human consumption. "I look 'ere, my lad," said the coster, "wot's the matter with you is that you ain't accustomed to good living."

A gentleman approached a kerb merchant who was selling a new style of toy and enquired the price of them. "Tuppence," was the reply. "Dear me," replied the gentleman, after fumbling in his pocket, "I'm afraid I've only one penny." "Don't worry about that, guv nor," came the cheerful reply, "never mind the odd penny. I respects the new poor."

A taxi driver, slowly "cruising" along the Euston Road looking for fares, overtook a young man dressed in the height of fashion. "West End, sir?" said the taxi man in his most ingratiating manner. There was no reply. "White-chapel or Mile End, sir?" suggested the driver once more. Still there was no response. "Deaf and Dumb 'Orspital, sir?" came the driver's final query before he stepped on the accelerator.



Unlike the large provincial towns, such as Liverpool, Bristol and Birmingham, the metropolis has no language of its own. Where in other towns there is a distinct dialect or current form of speech, that will display to the expert a marked difference in two places not more than twenty miles apart, London has no dialect. Just as it is a city where all the peoples of the earth have gathered together so it approximates to the Tower of Babel in the languages and dialects spoken within its confines, each of them in greater or lesser measure adding its quota to the common speech.

Although it is commonly thought to carry with it a certain measure of contempt the Londoner deep down in his heart is proud of the term "Cockney", just as the Yorkshireman is pleased when addressed by the somewhat doubtful epithet of "Yorkshire tyke". It is, to him, a flattering recognition that he belongs to the greatest city in the world. He fails to realise that the description was probably earned on account of his amusing and colossal ignorance of everything outside his own great metropolis. Many suggestions as to the derivation of the term have been put forward, it is probable that the true one is that given by Dugdale in his *Origines Judiciales*. According to this a young Londoner paying his first visit to the country heard a horse neighing, and then mentioned to his host that he had noticed the animal laughing. He was accord

Two East Enders were standing on the pavement as a well-known City Territorial regiment came by "Splendid fellows those Terriers," said one of them, "look at the medals some of 'em 'ave got Tried men most of 'em " "Yes," said the other, whose best girl had recently thrown him over owing to the superior attractions of a uniform, 'you're right Them as ain't been tried at the Old Bailey have been tried at the Clerkenwell Sessions "

A cabman, much to his indignation, received only his strictly legal fare For a moment words failed him, and then, looking sorrowfully at the money in his hand, he said plaintively, "If I'd bin as careful about the pennies as you are, mister, I'd have been a rich man to day" Another cabman, when no tip was added to the legal fare, requested, "Jump in again, sir I could have driven you five and a half yards further for this 'ere sum "

At the present time London language provides most humour when the speaker uses words not normally within his or her vocabulary, of this class George Belcher is the supreme exponent The Baptist clergyman, very anxious to increase his congregation, tackled everyone with whom he came into contact "Why don't you come to chapel sometimes?" he asked of Mr Smith, who, having finished his day's work, was leaning negligently against his own door post "Can't do that, mister," was the reply, "we're Church

of England We don't belong to your abomination"

A suburban dramatic society had given a representation of Hamlet, and Mrs Higgs, char-lady, who had been given a ticket by her employer, had formed one of the audience "Well, wot did yer think of the show?" a colleague asked on the following morning "Oh, it wern't up to much," replied Mrs Higgs judiciously, "though the chap wot did omelette was a fair treat"

Two suburban ladies, Mrs Balmoral and Mrs Kenilworth, had been for a week's holiday to France and Scotland respectively and on their return exchanged confidences "What I liked most in France," said Mrs B, "was when I once heard a lot of French pheasants singing the mayonnaise" "Yes," replied Mrs K, "and when we were in Scotland it was lovely to see people going about in beautiful kilts and pibrochs Travel does educate a person, doesn't it?"

A coroner was conducting an enquiry into a case of drowning in the Thames and one of the men who had pulled the body out of the water was giving his evidence "And what did you do after you pulled the man out of the water?" queried the coroner "Well," came the reply, "we tried artificial perspiration until the doctor came and then we knew there was no 'ope"

The two ladies were discussing their respective offspring "Yes," said Mrs Williams, "'Arry's doing very well at school His master told me that he was quite a polygon at his books" "Just like my Joe," countered Mrs Watkins "They tell me that 'e's a regular A 1 at Lord's at his job"

There would appear to have been at all times some particular portion of the metropolis famous for its, generally picturesque and forceful, language In the time of Queen Anne the palm in this respect was held by the market gardeners of Fulham, then the principal area from which the vegetable supplies of London were obtained At a later period it was won by the fish porters of Billingsgate whose rich and virile language probably reached its highest development during the Victorian era, but though, since that time, there has been a tendency to revert to a milder standard, the district still retains to some extent its linguistic peculiarities Only recently a widow lady, on being asked why she paid such frequent visits to the locality replied, "I go to 'ear the langwidge, it do remind me so of my pore dear 'usbin" As evidence, however, that there has been a great moderation, is the testimony of a well-known author, who, recently strolling in the precincts of the famous market, was nearly knocked down by one of the fish-carrying fraternity Justly indignant he gave vent to some very expressive sentiments, only to get

the reply, "Norty, norty. Mustn't use langwidje like that, guv'nor Don't forgit that servility costs nuffink"

In the heyday of its fame the language of Billingsgate was not confined in usage to the sterner sex, a certain number of the ladies of the neighbourhood were also among its devotees, and these were notorious for their fluent and non stop oratory There is, so far as can be traced, only one recorded instance where one of these ladies was beaten in a linguistic encounter, and the hero who accomplished this apparently impossible feat was a dry-as dust Scotch professor A fish-wife poured on him the full vials of her wrath but stopped at length for want of breath, whereupon the professor took up the running, and in accents vibrating with wrath and passion, called her a prism, a cone, a spheroid, a parallelogram, an elongated ellipse and similar endearing terms, until, reduced to a state of absolute terror, the poor woman fled to her neighbours for protection, with only just enough strength left to gasp out, "Lor, lumme, I never heard such a one! Gor blumey, 'ow 'e can swear!"

The class of language that, of recent years, has been most popular in London, is what might be called suburban English This is said to have had its origin in Brixton, its distinguishing characteristics are a lengthening of the vowel sounds, a continuous use of the phrase of the

moment, and a plentiful use of abnormal adjectives. It may be recognised at once by a frequent use of the words naice, quate, indade, recally, that's right, thrilling, dramatic, weird and blissful. In a further stage of development it sometimes approximates in its use of adjectives to what is commonly called "journallese", and to "shop assistant language", the latter being more easily distinguishable from its being usually prefaced with the word "Modom". Unfortunately, however, this suburban English is not always intelligible to others. The other day a Brixton lady was proceeding down the street when a bag of groceries she was carrying was knocked out of her hand by two boys, who came rushing past, with the result that the bottle was broken. "Look what you've done," said the lady in righteous indignation. "Garn," was the reply of one of the urchins. "I ain't done it." "Ain't done it," said the lady aghast at such a style of speech, 'My boy where is your gram mah?' "She's at 'ome in bed wiv noomonier," was the reply.

Fortunately for the small boy it sometimes happens that out of this striving for purity of language on the part of his elders he is able to make money. A lady visitor had just departed, and as the door closed on her the small boy heaved a sigh of relief and exclaimed, "Silly old geyser." "Cecil," said his shocked aunt, "you must never use expressions such as that

I'll give you a penny if you promise never to say it again" "Righto, auntie," came the cheerful reply, and then Cecil added in a confidential whisper, "I've a much worse one than that, it's worth sixpence"

A variant of normal English language that has risen of late years in London is what, for want of a better name, may be called "Lift English" It is easily distinguished by a continuous use of the words "Going up", "Going down", and enumeration of a catalogue of various articles, all delivered in a high pitched voice somewhat between the song of a nightingale and the utterances of a young and throaty curate Although at first it may give the impression of an operatic cum Girton training it will be found that its range is purely local and temporary When during a lull in the work, one of its users confers privately with another the song of the nightingale often drops to that of the crow, while the almost angelic "going up" is replaced by "I didn't 'alf tell 'im off I did Wot do you fink?"

It is really remarkable how many absurdities are perpetrated in our daily conversation, especially in our greetings We leave the house in the morning for the office or place where day by day we toil for the benefit of the Income Tax Authorities and have not proceeded far before we meet Jones who greets us with his customary hearty 'How d ye do?' Now what

does this mean, and what doing are we supposed to do? Is Jones under the impression that we do something that we ought not to do? Is our sin one of omission or commission? Surely in these days of Dora and prohibitive legislation it would be more logical to say, "How do you don't?" However we suppose he means "how are you," so we'll let it go at that.

Then, with that innate courtesy which has always been your distinguishing characteristic, you inform Jones that it is a nice day, but omit to state for what. Here is a striking example of man's selfish tendency to look at things only from his own point of view. How can there be a type of weather that will please everyone, for what may be nice to A may be anathema to B, or what is nice for ducks may be very unpleasant for cats? "Two minds with but a single thought" may be all right in some cases, but it doesn't apply to the lion and the lamb. Is it not easy to realise that what is nice weather for the sale of mackintoshes may result in the trade in garden hose being practically at a standstill?

On the other hand you may reply to Jones' idiotic question of "How do you do?" by the answer that you are "in the pink" or "in the blues", meaning by the first that you are pleased with everything in life, and by the second that the world is such a rotten place that the sooner you are removed from it the



better you will be pleased But why in the name of colour blindness is pink thus exalted and blue debased? What claim to fame has pink beyond the fact that it is a favourite colour of flappers? Surely it is one of the last to typify glowing health and energy Moreover of what has blue been guilty that we should take it to describe lowness of spirit and despondency?

Jones, continuing the conversation next volunteers the information that for three days he has been laid up in bed with a bad cold Here again is an obviously untrue statement, as if he has been in bed he has been laid down with a cold, for extremist in many things as Jones may be it is hardly likely that he has yet taken to sleeping in a more or less vertical position However it may be that in using the term "laid up" he intends to compare himself to a ship, though he would not be too pleased if we ventured to suggest that he was an old hulk

Next with that characteristic sympathy you tell him that you know of some stuff that is excellent for a cold Here the height of absurdity is reached, since this is the very last thing in the world that Jones wants What his very soul craves for is something bad for a cold something that will torture and murder the distressing complaint from which he has been suffering and that will put it to death for all

time. The last thing in the world that he wants is something good for it, or that will lengthen its days.

The imbecility of these enquiries as to health is shown in the story of the blind man who asked his lame *confrère*, "How goes it?" "As you see," answered the lame to the blind. What can be more absurd than in response to an enquiry as to how some sick person is progressing to receive the reply, "Well, he's up and down." In view of the fact that we know full well that the patient in question has been confined to bed for weeks it is hardly likely that he or she has now taken up the rôle of marionette and is dancing up and down. Although we may laugh at the expression used we must admit that the old lady to whom such a question was put was more logical when she replied, "How is Mrs. Brown? Well, she ebbs and flows."

Finally, as we prepare to leave Jones and resume our way, we ask him to drop in on us one evening, ignoring the fact that much as we value the friendship it would be put to a severe strain if Jones took us at our word and dropped in through the roof by the only possible means, from a balloon or aeroplane. Such an invitation is perhaps no better expressed than was, "Well, if ever you come within a mile of my house you'll stay there all night won't you?" It is often doubtful what to reply to such a query, but an unfortunate choice was made by the man

who answered, "You may be certain I shall come if I am spired," thus laying himself open to a "Well, we shan't expect you if you are dead "

The more we analyse our everyday expressions the more we are forced to conclude that we have become very slipshod in their use, and that if they were accepted in a literal sense the result might often be disastrous. There is no more common expression than the enquiry, "What's going on to day?" To what does this refer? Time or the revolution of the world, the only two things that can be said to be always going on? Perhaps the best answer to such a query was that given by Douglas Jerrold who, when it was asked him by a noted bore, replied, "I am," and immediately moved off.

An equally smart reply to a question phrased in similar slipshod Engbsh was once given by that great comedian, Arthur Roberts. He was asked on one occasion, "Is there something on at the Town Hall?" and curtly replied, "Yes, the roof "

Unfortunate, too, was the hostess, who, when a guest apologised for being late in turning up for dinner, endeavoured to put him at his ease by saying, "It's quite all right, Mr Brown, you never could be too late "

Perhaps there was a touch of malice, if not a home thrust in the following incident. "Do you know," said a gentleman to a lady of his

acquaintance, "that I met you in town last night I saw you twice, in fact, but you didn't acknowledge me" "No," replied the lady with meaning, "I never acknowledge people in that state"

The recruitment of the police from the ranks of the universities and the public schools has made it very necessary that, in the case of those who wish to 'ask a policeman', their enquiry should be made in strictly grammatical terms, or at least, terms incapable of any double interpretation "Can you tell me where this road goes, please?" asked an old lady of P C X 10 "It doesn't go anywhere, madam," was the reply, "it just stops where it is"

On another occasion the writer was himself caught in a similar manner I approached a constable on duty in Cambridge Circus and asked, "Can you tell me the way to the Drury Lane Theatre?" "Yes," was the reply After that came a dead silence, and then the question was repeated "Yes," came the answer again, and then I realised that it would have been better to have used the word "will"

A polite and yet common phrase very often carelessly used is "my time is yours" Under some circumstances this is quite permissible and indeed praiseworthy, but not in such a case as that of the gentleman who used it when asked by his hostess what time he would like his bath in the morning

The more one considers some of the expressions in common use the more one's sympathies must go out to the foreigner, not yet accustomed to what Mrs. Malaprop might call "our English idioms". "Look," complained a French visitor, "there vos a fire in my 'otel, de flames rush at me, I am scorched, I fly, and den one man say to me, 'Keep cool'."

Another foreigner complained bitterly as follows. "I am in your train; I look out of ze window and someone say 'Look out!' so I look out further and I 'ave 'alf my 'ead taken off by a post."

It is pleasant to be able to record, however, that one Frenchman found no fault with our language. "The English trains," said he, "are magnifique. Not only are there carriages for smoking, but for everything else. I 'ave seen them marked Bath, Reading, Sandwich, and all sorts of other good things."

## CHAPTER XI

### STREET ROWS

STREET rows, like drunken men, are every day becoming more and more rare, and, to quote dear Mrs. Malaprop, anyone at the present time may walk down the worst of London streets on a Saturday evening with impunity.

At one time, and that not so many years ago, the drunken man and the street fight were two of the principal street amusements; the comic paper and the humorous artist lived and thrived on them, they were as sure and steady a source of income as the mother-in-law joke, but now it is exceptional to find the former while the latter rarely ever goes beyond the limits of wordy warfare.

It is, however, in this strife of words that the average Cockney comes into his own. When anger gets the upper hand he frequently becomes picturesquely direct in speech, with the result that when the matter comes up for final adjustment by the magistrate his best phrases have to be written down and handed up. What could have been more conclusive than the winding-up of an acrimonious debate by one contestant who summarised his opinion of his opponent in the

crushing sentence, "If I was to tell you what I thought about you they'd charge me entertainment tax"?

As we have already said the average street row rarely ends in a fight, it sooner or later fizzles out owing to the arrival of the police,—probably much to the delight of both contestants who have achieved notoriety without suffering any physical pain—or owing to one of the parties coming to an end of his vocabulary. In such a contest one party had given the other his full, free and frank opinion of him, together with a few not altogether complimentary remarks on his birth, parentage and upbringing. When the recital had finished No. 2 failed to take up his cue. "Why don't you answer him back?" an interested spectator asked. "'Ow can I?" replied No. 2 in plaintive tones. "'E's used all the best words."

Occasionally, however, we come across the exceptional case of one party spoiling for a fight. Only recently at Willesden Police Court a policeman giving evidence stated "There were fully one hundred and fifty people in the crowd and they were all fighting. I arrested the prisoner because he wanted to fight the lot."

The preliminaries of a street fight are very much like the passing of diplomatic notes between two nations on the verge of war, the aim of each party being to tell the world how strong he is and how poor is the other's chance of

to what the opponent "has got coming to him" is expressed in what might be called the indirect method "I ain't going to threaten you," said one contestant, "but if anybody's asking for a mouthful of loose teeth 'e can 'ave it"

Recriminations become most personal, however, when trouble arises among the gentler sex, and in such cases the most intimate details concerning every member of the opponent's family are discovered Two ladies, who hailed from that salubrious region known as the Isle of Dogs, were quarrelling fiercely "Go hon," said one, "wot's your husband anyway? He's a fret-worker, *that's what he is* Soon as he gets a job he starts to fret" "Well," came the quick reply, "what's yours? A brass finisher that's wot 'e is Finishes his brass on the way home every pay night"

When in the case of some of these ladies matters get beyond mere wordy warfare the resultant scrap is not always carried out under Queensberry rules A lady presented herself at the doctor's surgery very much the worse for wear "This is a strange bite," said the doctor after examining her, "it's too small for a horse's bite and too large for a dog's" "Oh, sir," explained the injured one, "it wasn't an animal at all, it was another lydy"

Where the trouble is between husband and wife the subsequent evidence in the police court often throws some interesting side lights on life



as it is lived in some of the poorer quarters of a great city. In one case a husband was giving evidence. "The police say that you and your wife had some words. Is that correct?" queried the magistrate. "Well, your Honour," replied the husband, "I had some but I didn't get a chance to use them."

"Do you mean to say," a magistrate asked one Amazon, "that such a physical wreck as your husband gave you that black eye?" The woman smiled grimly. "He wasn't a physical wreck, your Worship, till he gave me the black eye."

A husband and wife, having taken their troubles into the street and refusing to go home when ordered, found themselves making an appearance at the local police court. The magistrate, after listening to much contradictory evidence, informed the husband that he would be fined ten shillings. "I can't pay it, your worship," whined the culprit, "strike me pink I can't. I'm out of work meself, and that there woman has abs'lutely ruined me." "Ruined you?" queried the magistrate. "How did she do that?" "Well it's like this yer see. I got 'er no less than three jobs, an' she lost 'em all wiv 'er 'igh 'anded ways."

A street quarrel, with the husband and wife taking leading parts, finally reached a point when the assistance of the law had to be invoked. Looking round for evidence the constable

approached a neighbour who had been an interested spectator of the scrap with the query, "I understand you were present at the beginning of the quarrel between these two people?" "That's right, constable," was the reply, "but that was more than two years ago" "Two years ago? What do you mean?" "Well, you see," replied the embryo witness, "I was at their wedding"

In another case the defendant, who had made strenuous efforts towards the creation of a Brighter London, found himself in the dock charged with disorderly conduct Ordered to pay twenty shillings he at once planked down the money and demanded a receipt "What do you want a receipt for?" asked the warrant officer "I want to show my wife that I didn't spend all the money on drink," was the sufficient explanation

"I was just standing at the corner of the street with the missus," a witness said, "when that gentleman over there (pointing to the defendant) came along and used the most awful langwidge " "Then what did you do?" asked the magistrate. "I told him," said the witness with dignity, "that I wouldn't have such langwidge used in front of my wife " "Did he make any reply?" "Yes, sir, he did, he said, 'How did I know she wanted to swear first?'"

A street row culminated in a summons for assault, and in his defence the accused asserted with true East End vehemence that throughout the whole affair he had been the injured party and that all his actions had been of the most peaceable nature "Come, come," said the magistrate, "you surely don't mean to say that this man assaulted you and that you didn't even attempt to defend yourself?" "That's right, guvnor," came the cheerful reply "Then," went on his interrogator, "how do you explain the fact that in no less than three places he bears the mark of your teeth?" "That's easy," came the confident reply, "Why, 'e 'urt me so much when 'e was a pounding of me that I 'ad to 'ave somefink to bite on or I couldn't a stood it "

In a case recorded by Mr R. E. Corder, a row, which had started in a public house, finished in the street, and the matter came up for legal adjustment in the form of cross-summoneses

who barely reached up to his wife's shoulder. "Have you ever summoned your husband before?" asked the presiding magistrate "Yes, your worship " "What for?" "For assault " "Indeed, and what was the result?" "He was taken to the West London Hospital and bound over," said the injured lady

A somewhat similar case is noted by Mr Joseph Heighton in his *Legal Life and Humour* An eccentric and very voluble elderly woman appeared at Marylebone Court seeking protection from her husband There had been the usual rows both in the house and outside, with the result that the lady stated she was afraid of him and that he had threatened to set fire to the home "What did you do?" asked Mr Plowden, who was trying the case "Why," explained the lady "I calls for a bobby to reject him out from doing more violence, and he up with a poker and tongs to knock me brains out I wilfully rushed at him to protect meself, and I threw him down as I might just there in the corner " "What," said Mr Plowden, "poker and tongs and all?" "I took the tongs from him," explained the lady, "and I locked him in a room and left him there. Now what am I to do with him?" "Well," replied the general magistrate, "I suggest that you do just as you did before " "Humph," said the disconsolate lady turning to leave the court, "if you don't give it 'im I'll do it swop me bob I will "

In contrast to the virago is the meek little woman who will say or do anything to save some bully from the punishment he has richly deserved. In one such case, the husband not content with thrashing his wife within the four walls had followed her into the street and there administered further punishment. The poor woman, however, could not be got to say a word against him. "Your husband has been treating you badly?" queried the magistrate. "No, no, your washup," replied the little woman with emphasis. "But did he not bite off a piece of your ear?" "No, yer washup, 'e didn't, I did it myself."

A somewhat prolific contributor to street-humour, so far as rows are concerned, is the sailor, who, after a long enforced period of temperance at sea, has come back with the usually successful intention of making his presence felt. The police, as a rule, are very kind to this class of offender and will give him every chance to get away, but it sometimes happens that Jack is not in the mood for listening to a word in season and there follows the invitation to "come inside". A seaman who had received a delicate hint to get back to his ship was moved to reply, "Top yer boom, mate, make sail and leave me to meself." At that moment the powers of the law were augmented by the arrival of another somewhat fat policeman. The sailor at once opened the full force of his wrath on him.

"Avast there, you water logged old hulk Sheer off and find another berth Where's my ——— mate? He'll soon settle you, my hearty Hallo there, pass the word forard for Tom Bowling "

As a rule these cases always end in the same way, and when the wrongdoer comes out of the court and a pal queries, "Well how did you get on?" he can generally truthfully reply, "Fine " In one case, however, the culprit had such a bad record that the magistrate came to the conclusion that sterner measures were necessary, and accordingly varied the procedure by giving six months "Hi, Bill," said the prisoner to a friend at the back of the court, "tell Liza I shan't be home to tea "

In such street rows as end in a police court attendance the husband usually will not make an appearance but sends his wife to represent him This also is the case when the trouble is with the landlord, the rate collector or the representative of the deferred pay system, and so fixed is the custom that the privilege is now looked upon as one of the sacred rights of a wife In the few cases where a husband does appear he is regarded as an interloper, and his wife is at once relegated by the other women to the ranks of poor mean spirited creatures who daren't call their soul their own On this point Mr R E Corder observes, "The absent wife is not popular She has offended agunst the code Every woman with a grievance in and around

Mile End prides herself on being able to express herself fluently and at considerable length, and the protesting husband is regarded as a blackleg butting into the guarded rights of wronged wives."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LOAFER AND THE BEGGAR

THE town-loafer's life has been well described by one of the fraternity who, when asked what he did all day, replied "Sometimes I leans against the wall and thinks, and at other times I just leans "

It is in the streets of London and our great cities that we find the high grade loafer, the man who has acquired a double First in the art of sauntering through life with the minimum of effort. He generally wears an habitual air of discontent, and on the few occasions when he does open his mouth it is only to voice the complaint that this is "a blank blank rotten world for the likes of me" Yet he has a great affection for his own life and, when crossing a street, will even sometimes be moved to display unexpected agility, usually followed by an excess of profanity.

The loafer is almost eloquent on what he calls his bad luck, yet he has, did he but realise it, much for which to be thankful. There are no strict hours of duty for him, his goings and comings are, as and when, his fancy dictates, *exhaustion from physical labour is an unknown*



quality to him; he finds no need for concentration; he is master of himself and lord of his own doings.

The army of loafers is a great and all-embracing one, and anyone will be welcomed into its ranks provided that he can show clearly his principal occupation in life to be looking on. It includes all kinds of trades, not forgetting the little known ones of snow-shoveller, skate-fastener, portraying Father Christmas at big stores and thrower of confetti at weddings. Its *personnel* varies somewhat according to the season. In the winter there will be found in its ranks a large number of haymakers, while in the summer snow-shovellers seem to predominate.

The loafer is a gregarious bird and only parts from his fellows when trying to exact coin from some simple minded person by the old expedient of "telling the tale". As a rule he is to be found in coveys, usually in the proximity of the Labour Exchange or a public house. At this point he roosts, breaking forth very occasionally into conversation, though his remarks are generally of the monosyllabic order with a tendency towards the controversial. The principal topics of conversations in these street Parliaments are, firstly, the day's racing, and, secondly, work. The humour of the first is very much of a pessimistic order, as, by some irony of fate, the horses fancied usually figure amongst the "also rans". "Did the 'orse win wot you put yer money on?"

queried one of the fraternity of a pal "No, 'e didn't," came the growling reply, "'e was pinched for loitering"

Next to watching other people at it the principal pleasure of the loafer is talking about work. He would be a multi millionaire were it possible to make money by talking about it. Here again his conversation, such as it is, is of the pessimistic order. "Wot cheer, Alf," was the salutation of one of the great fraternity to another. "You're looking sick, what's the matter?" "Work," came the gloomy reply, "it's *nuffink* but work, work, work from morning ter night." "'Ow long yer bin at it?" "Start ter-morrer"

A benevolent old gentleman who asked "So you want a job of work, eh?" received the reply, "I said a job, I never said a job of work." Knowing their inmost feelings, one can sympathise with the disgust of a son of toil who, having roused himself sufficiently to read the notices on a hoarding, came across one headed, "Sale of Work." For a moment or two he gazed at it blankly, and then, after expectorating in contempt, murmured disgustedly, "Lumme, fancy anybody buying it"

It must not be concluded that the real and true loafer is afraid of work. "I ain't afeared o' work," said one against whom this accusation was levelled, 'I'd lie down and go ter sleep alongside it any day"

The excuses put forward in excuse for not finding work are many and varied "You can't find anything to do?" queried one interested old lady "No, mum Everybody wants a reference from my last employer" "Well, can't you get that?" "No, mum He's been dead twenty years" Another possible sympathiser had been told that it was impossible for the applicant to get a day's work at his own job "Why?" came the natural question "Because I'm a night watchman, lidy," was the convincing reply

It does happen, however, that occasionally we come across some member of the loafer army who, rising above the general misanthropy, treats work or a suggestion of it as a great joke One such individual applied for a job, not with any hope or desire of getting it but with some sort of idea that it was the right thing to do, and had been told by the foreman that they had no work for him "Don't let that worry you," was his answer, "the little I'd do wouldn't make any difference"

Another Weary Willie had approached an old gentleman with a suggestion as regards pecuniary assistance, when, to his surprise, the latter retorted with, "What would you say if I offered you work?" "Bless yer life, sir," came the jovial reply, "I wouldn't mind a bit, I can take a joke same as most people"

When the loafer does find himself in a job he is not usually noticeable for the amount of

work which he gets through "This job ain't no good ter me," grumbled one gentleman "My eyesight ain't good enuf fer it" "You don't want eyesight for digging," said his companion "I know I don't," was the reply, "but I'm so shortsighted that I can't see when the foreman ain't looking so I got ter keep on working all the time"

Another complainant said that he couldn't carry any more bricks up the ladder as he'd "come over all of a tremble" "All right," the unsympathetic foreman replied, "then get busy with the sieve"

Unfamiliar as he is with the ordinary tools of a workman the loafer's ideas as to their uses are sometimes a little strange One such person had been taken on at a time of pressure "Can you use a shovel?" said the employer "'Course I can," was the reply, "I've often cooked a bit o' 'am on one"

Though no believer in work for himself he looks at the subject, so far as concerns his wife, from an entirely different standpoint, and from his comfortable position in bed will often in the mornings exhort her to hurry up and get his breakfast or she will be late for her job Now don't spend this at the public house," said a lady from whom help had been solicited, 'but take it home to your wife' "I ain't got a wife, hdy," came the pathetic reply, "I got ter earn me own living"

A kind-hearted old gentleman was reading an applicant for assistance a lesson on work and its attendant blessings "It's about time you started to do something, hard work never killed anybody," he said; "You're wrong there, guv'nor," was the confident reply, "I've lost three wives through it "

Sad to say this pride in being one of the leisured classes is even taking deep root amongst the rising generation "Well, Jimmy," said a gentleman greeting a small boy of about fourteen, "I suppose you'll soon be leaving school!" "Garn," was the reply with all the scorn of workless adolescence, "I left long ago Been out o' work nine munse "

Monosyllabic as the loafer usually is, nevertheless he is a constant critic of those who work "I'm orful thankful I ain't a copper," soliloquised one "Must be a tejus life 'anging about and loiterin' " When, too, he is offended at the disagreeable sight of work his sarcastic talent comes into play and once again he breaks silence. A navvy was busy breaking up a road when one of the great idle family drew near and for a minute or two watched the display of energy Then, mustering all his powers of sarcasm, he enquired, "'Ullo, Bill, any coal yet?"

But it is against the foreigner whom he accuses of coming over here and taking the bread out of his mouth that our friend's eloquence is usually levelled "Them blinkin' furriners,"

a job as'll larst 'im three years." "Go on," said an unbeliever, "'Oo said so?" "Mr. Justice Ivory."

The true loafer is essentially a product of our modern civilisation. On leaving school, where he has experienced the only discipline in his life, he commences to look around to see what comfortable little niche he can fill. This process of looking round he finds very pleasing and he relishes it to the full. Gone is the restraint of the school; there is still the parental roof to which to return when he is hungry and tired; the life of the streets provides him with amusement; congenial company is to be found on all sides, and he can usually pick up enough coppers to supply his simple wants. He notices that a large number of people seem to get on without working and he sees no reason why he should not add to their ranks.

In due time, forced by a certain amount of economic pressure, he drifts into the ranks of newspaper sellers or errand boys, and here he learns something about betting and becomes an authority on what will win the 2.30. Sometimes he will do odd jobs outside railway stations but the police soon put an end to his activities in that direction. Be his job what it will he does it badly and with the minimum of effort until there comes a time when his employer and himself seem to hold such contrary views on his usefulness that his services are no longer

required. At this point he usually joins the army of loafers. Not long after his recruitment into this great army he marries, and the burden of his support is shifted from the parental shoulders to that of his wife. Rapidly he assumes all the characteristics of his tribe. His wife provides food and lodging, while the amount he requires for tobacco, beer and betting he obtains by some means that no one has yet discovered. Whatever he gets he spends exclusively on himself. He is not an early riser, and the only case in which one of the tribe was known to get up early was when his wife told him that his mother-in-law would be along in a few minutes. His conversation is normally monosyllabic, being largely made up of grunts and indistinct ejaculations. When it is not of horse racing and "certs" it is a fairly blasphemous condemnation of the things that are. He has very decided views on luck. Sometimes he will talk vaguely of a job of work. As regards his thoughts they are probably of nothing at all, and he wears an habitual air of discontent. He is not usually vicious, nor is he criminal, as the latter requires some amount of effort, and in addition he has a wholesome fear of the law. He never takes part in fights, but, as a spectator, he sometimes wakes up sufficiently to shout advice. On the whole he would appear to be something half way between the animal and the vegetable kingdom.

An old offender started on a second round of his clients. "But," expostulated one, "didn't I give you twopence a week ago and here you are as disreputable as ever?" "That's quite right, mum," was the reply, "but you see it's such deuced hard work breaking into the smart set with tuppence."

The begging profession like all others unfortunately appears to suffer from an excess of supply over demand. "Could you help a poor beggar?" whined one applicant. "Get away," was the reply, "I've had a dozen of your kind already to-day." "Yes, and no one knows better than I do how the profession is overcrowded."

The beggar's humour often emerges when the applicant meets with either inadequate or no success at all. "Spare a copper, pretty lady, for a poor blind man," pleaded one of the fraternity. "Poor man, can't you see at all?" "No, lidy." The questioner dropped a halfpenny into the tin mug and passed on. "And I called her pretty," growled the discontented one.

A London vicar was called upon by a professional beggar who pleaded for half a crown to ward off starvation. The vicar knew the applicant and refused. "Garn," said the disappointed lady, "call yerself a clergyman. Why a flint's a fevver-bed compared wiv your 'ard 'eart."

A lady of stern and forbidding presence had refused to contribute and threatened to call her



husband. "God help the poor man that couldn't say 'no' to you," came the reply

A request for help had been made in curt, if not rude, language "You ought to ask for manners not money," was the indignant reply "I asked for what I thought you had most of," countered the applicant

The lady or gentleman of Irish extraction usually takes first place in this kind of repartee, and the following are a few of the replies given by unsuccessful applicants

"May yer last dance be a hornpipe in the air "

"May yez never die till ye see yer own funeral "  
(A pious wish that the refuser may be hanged )

"May yez melt off the earth like the snow off the mountains "

Thackeray used to tell a story of an old beggar woman who, when she saw him put his hand in his pocket, said, "May the blessing av God follow yez all yer life," but as he only pulled out his snuff box she added, "and never overtake yez "

On the other hand the beggar of the same nationality to whom something has been given is profuse in his thanks as witness the following

"May yez never see yer wife a widow "

"May the copper yez gave me be a candle to light yer soul to glory "

"The hivins be yer bed "

Between the loafer and the beggar there is the great difference that the energy shown by the latter in pursuing his occupation is entirely missing from the former. Moreover it must be admitted that begging is sometimes very hard work. "Have you ever done a stroke of work in your life?" asked a doubting housewife of one of the fraternity. "Lydy," was the reply, 'if you think asking people like you for a bite to eat aint work you don't know what work is."

The reasons given for adopting this calling cover a very large field, but none beats that given by the man who had obviously seen better days to a lady who enquired how it was that an educated man, as he appeared to be, could be a beggar. "Because, madam," was the reply, "it is the only calling in which a gentleman may accost a lady without an introduction."

"How did you come to this?" enquired an old lady at the same time donating a penny. "I was like you, lady," was the reply, "always giving away vast sums to the poor and needy."

The pleas put forward as to why the applicant should be helped are sometimes quaint. For the love of Hiven, maam," said an Irishman, "give me something for a crust of bread for I'm so thirsty I don't know where I shall sleep to night." Even more convincing was the burly ruffian who cornered a tiny little man in a dark alley and made his request in this form. 'Can you do anything, guvnor, for a poor chap wot s

got nothing in the world 'cept this 'ere bloomin' eudgel?"

"Help a poor cripple, lidy," whined a professional beggar "How are you crippled?" said the benevolent old lady as she groped for her purse "Financially," was the convincing reply

A gentleman had been stopped by a decrepit old lady who was pushing along an apparently even more decrepit old man in a bath chair "But you were the one who was in the bath chair yesterday and was supposed to be ill," expostulated the gentleman "Yes, sir," was the reply "but it's me husband's turn to be invalid to day"

It is wonderful with what skill the professional will extricate himself when apparently cornered with an unanswerable question An old officer was stopped by an alleged ex service man who claimed that he had been shot through the heart at Ypres "Why, you abominable liar," said the officer, "if you'd been shot through the heart you would have been as dead as a door nail" "Not at all, sir," came the prompt reply, "my heart was in me mouth"

Another of the fraternity hoped to prove that at least once in his life he had been guilty of really hard work and stated that he was the author of a book called *Twelve ways of becoming a millionaire* "Then why are you begging?" was the natural query "Because it is one of the twelve ways," came the answer

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Ambiguous, however, was the one who in his gratitude said, "May yez be in Hivin in a fortnight "

The Law provides the one drawback to what otherwise might be a very pleasant life, and sooner or later it stretches out its long arm and secures its victim "I suppose, my poor man," said one sympathetic old lady, "that you've had many trials in your life " "Yes, ma'am," was the proud answer, "but only one conviction "

' Well," said the kindly old vicar, "I don't altogether believe your story but I'm going to give you something in spite of my convictions " "Don't worry about that, sir, I've had lots of them myself," came the cheery reply

Occasionally, though rarely, the beggar, not the begged one provides the humour "Yes," said the importunate one, "I'm a sailor Followed the sea for fifteen years I have " "Well," replied the unbeliever, "You don't look as if you ever caught it up "

"You couldn't see a man starve, could you lady?" whined the professional beggar "Not very well, my man," said the old lady, ' I've come out without my glasses "

An old lady in a smart brougham had given generously "Bless you, my lady," said the grateful recipient, "may we meet in Heaven " "Good gracious what impertinence," said the shocked and haughty donor "Drive on, James!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### PUBS AND BARMAIDS

*A seat to sit at ease here in mine inn  
To see the comedy, and laugh and chuck  
At the variety and throng of humours  
And dispositions that come jostling in  
And are still as they one drove hence another  
Why will you envy me my happiness?*

BEN JONSON

"Use an Inne, not as your owne house, but as an Inne, not to dwell in but to rest for such time as ye haue iust and needfull occasion and then to returne to your owne families"

*Sixteenth Century Broadsheet*

THE "pub",—which term includes all houses of liquid refreshment from the lordly hotel to the humble beerhouse,—is an institution peculiar to the British Empire and one dear to the majority of Englishmen all the world over. It is almost an imperial heritage, a fundamental portion of the British constitution, an integral part of the background of the Anglo-Saxon race, and one to which the thoughts of home-sick wanderers in remote corners of the earth often turn with longing when meditating on its attractions and its joys

Go where you will and you will usually find, and most certainly outside our great arteries of commerce, that the pub. is the most impressive building in the street. In many instances it is even a serious rival to the Public Library or the Town Hall, while in most cases it dwarfs into insignificance the Police Station or the Fire Brigade Headquarters. More often than not it is the terminus of a bus or tram route, and, if this is not the case, it is generally a stopping place. In spite of this, however, the pub. is essentially modest. Other trades may boldly flaunt the sign, "Patronised by Royalty", but the pub. is silent and even makes no mention of the fact that Queen Elizabeth once slept within its walls or quaffed a gallon of its famous ale, an honour apparently held by almost all England's old inns.

The pub., befitting such an essential part of the British constitution, is naturally conservative, and in its very construction emphasises the distinction between rich and poor, a classification that cannot be attempted by any other trade or even by our great palaces of commerce. Here the line of demarcation is strongly drawn. For the poor, whose means are insufficient to enable them to purchase their beer in anything but the smallest quantity, there is the jug and bottle department, usually a small box-like compartment with only room for one, and bearing a strong resemblance to the pledge



counter of the pawnbroker. Next comes the Public Bar with sawdust covered floor and a few hard wooden seats, where, in consideration of the fact that the surroundings are of a plainer character, that the barmaids are not so good looking, and that often the glasses are only dipped in a mixture of beer and water instead of being washed and dried, the customer obtains his beer at a lower price. Next in the social scale is the Private Bar, where those who consider themselves of a higher standing than the Public Bar, and yet do not aspire to the Lounge, can obtain what they require. It is also much frequented by husband and wife where the modesty of the latter will not allow her to face the bold scrutiny of the Public or the Saloon Bar. It is usually restricted in space and approximates to the one time second class on railways, and similarly bids fair soon to be a thing of the past. Lastly there is the Saloon Bar or Lounge where, in compensation for a higher price, the customer will find marble-topped tables, carpets, sporting prints on the walls, and the best looking barmaids. Generally these terms are as fixed as the laws of the Medes and the Persians, but an original note was struck by one old seaman, who, on taking over the *Seven Stars* in the Goldhawk Road, Shepherd's Bush, in order to retain the flavour of the sea, christened his rooms, the Fo'castle, the Galley, the State Room, the Saloon, etc

As a rule the landlord is only to be found on the customer's side of the counter in the Saloon Bar, and in this place he will often unbend and talk with the frequenters. His appearances in the more democratic parts of his domain are confined to a stately progress through them at fairly long intervals, with an occasional condescending nod to some humble but regular customer whom he deigns to notice, and who, proud of such attention, usually replies with an enquiry as to the "Guv'nor's" health. The public treatment of his staff is mildly despotic. In every respect he is almost feudal in the way in which he keeps alive those little distinctions that tend to keep the common people in their proper place. So far as he can prevent it there shall be no indecent mingling of class with class.

As already stated the usually outstanding features of the Saloon Bar are plate glass mirrors, sporting prints, lithographed portraits of royalties and marble-topped tables. These tables are not, however, used by the regular patrons but only by ladies who are settled there by their husbands with a small port or a Guinness while the males return to take up the more usual and comfortable position of leaning against the bar. Accompanying the picture of royalty is usually one of some distinguished sailor or soldier. The average publican is a militarist, a great supporter of the Navy and Army, although

should be exposed to view, and so placed that the customer could see his own wine drawn and make certain that there was no mixture, or that no bad wine or droppings of casks had been added. About the same period a regulation of the City of London forbade "the mayor, sheriffs or aldermen, or their clerks, sergeants or bedels to brew themselves or by others for sale, or to keep any wine tavern, or to trade in any other thing *to which a low estimate is attached*."

Equally as down on the trade were the writers of the time. Thus in his *Mirour de l'Homme* John Gower, the friend of Chaucer, writes of the publican of the day under the name of Trick "Better than any maker of magic Trick knoweth all the arts of the trade, all its subtleties and its guile. He is crafty to counterfeit Rhine wine with French vintage, nay even such as never grew but by Thames shore, even such will he brisk up and disguise, and baptize it for good Rhenish in the pitcher, so quaintly can he dissemble that no man is so cautious but that Trick will trick him in the end."

The life of an innkeeper who provided also lodging as well as drink must have been far from an easy one in the early days of London's history, no customer of his could stay more than a day or night unless his host was prepared to go bail for him, while in addition if he committed some crime and then absconded the poor landlord had to make answer for him. The prices

which he might charge were also fixed by statute, and in 1331 this resulted in the only strike ever recorded among the publicans of London. In that year, dissatisfied with the prices allowed to be charged, the landlords closed their doors and refused to sell. This was reported to the Mayor who made a tour of the city and ordered certain offenders to be brought to the Guildhall where an enquiry was held. Unfortunately at this point the record breaks off and we have no further knowledge of what happened.

Although, as already shown, innkeepers had a bad name, that of the brewers was even worse. This is shown in a very popular religious play of the time called *The Harrowing of Hell* in which, when all the wicked souls are released from the nether world, and the Devil is allowed to retain one as a souvenir, the one so selected for retention is that of a brewer. Moreover, that such bad name was fairly general, is evidenced by an extract from the records of Oxford, when, in 1343, it is stated that "great evils arise both to the clerks and the townsmen of the City of Oxford owing to the negligence and dishonesty of the brewers of ale." To remedy this all the brewers were summoned to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where they were each made to swear that for the future they would brew ale that was good and wholesome "so far as his ability and human frailty permitted him." That

it going to start?" "It's going to start right now," was the reply, "I've no money to pay for the beer."

Another individual, whose ingenuity was nearly as great as his thirst, went into the public bar where the landlord was serving and asked, "I say, guv'nor, how many pints in a quart?" "Two, of course," was the reply. With a word of thanks the man withdrew and going into the next bar ordered two pints from the barmaid with the remark, "This is on the house, miss. If yer don't believe me I'll ask the guv'nor," and leaning round the partition he enquired, "You did say two pints, didn't yer, guv'nor?" "Yes," came the reply and the drinks were accordingly produced.

A type of customer, whose appearance is none too warmly welcomed, is the one determined that his companion shall be the one to pay. Two gentlemen, both of this calibre, went into a bar and each waited anxiously for the other to make an offer. At length No. 1 remarked, "I went to the Zoo yesterday and threw a couple of hewers at the lions." "What's hewers?" naturally enquired the other. "Oh mine's a double Scotch," said No. 1 eagerly.

The golden days of the Trade apparently are now past and gone. The nation would appear every day to be growing more and more temperate. At one time the drunken man shared with the mother-in-law pride of place as a subject for

humour, but now he seems almost to have disappeared from the pages of the comic journal. Drunkenness has ceased to be a cause of amusement as drinking is on the decline. The decline is illustrated by the story of the man who applied for a job as "chucker-out". "Chucker-out," said Boniface, "I don't want a chucker-out, my lad. What I want is a chucker in."

Another most important person in the licensing trade is the barmaid. Many things have been said to the disparagement of this lady, perhaps the most impartial description is that given by F. Berkeley Smith in his book *In London Town*. His summing up is as follows: "A most important share of the oil which regulates London is dispensed by the barmaid. It is she who often disperses the quarrelsome, quells loud talking, settles the beginnings of foolish disputes, sends home many a young blood on the spree with a chat and glass and a cheery good night, makes up her accounts with honesty and precision at the end of the day and seems, to all outward appearances content with a modest salary and no tips."

The London barmaid is a type unto herself and she is a great factor in preserving harmony throughout the great city. The man who at home lays down the law like a savage autocrat to a trembling wife and children, the uncrowned emperor of the hearthrug, or the morose individual who scowls at every woman that crosses

this conception of the proprietor as endeavouring always to fleece his customer still exists is shown by the tale of the visitor to Wormwood Scrubs prison who asked a prisoner for what crime he was detained there. "I am here for robbing in a pub.," was the reply. "Oh," said the visitor, "were you the proprietor?"

Looking back on the past we may congratulate ourselves that thirst has apparently diminished since the days, when, in the reign of Henry VIII, a maid of honour at the court was allowed eight gallons of ale a day, and if, after consuming that amount, she still felt thirsty she was at liberty to go to the buttery and get another gallon. Moreover at that period ladies apparently liked their beer strong; in a letter from the Earl of Leicester to Lord Burleigh we find the following, "There is not one drop of good drink for her (Queen Elizabeth) there. We were fain to send to London and Kenilworth and divers other places where ale was; her own bere was so strong as there was no man able to drink it." Even this period, however, was beaten by that of the Gin Fever (1690-1701) when distilleries sprang up everywhere for the manufacture of gin, and retailers increased at such a rate that in London one house in every four was a gin shop. It was even sold from barrows, and a common notice was, "Here a man may get drunk for a penny and dead drunk for twopence."

In days when reduction is constantly to the

fore, and total prohibition is endeavouring to destroy rather than to amend, it is interesting to note that as early as the reign of Edward III an attempt was made to reduce the number of taverns in London to three one in Chepe, one in Wallbrook and a third in Lombard Street. Again by the first Licensing Act in 1552 the number in the city was restricted to forty. In spite of such attempts however the English pub has retained the affection of the people, for, as Mr Thomas Burke writes in his work *The English Inn*, "Englishmen have lost respect for their Parliament their Church, and their Press, they still respect their inns for they are as much a part of us as they were of our fathers. Should we abolish the inn we might as well prepare to abolish the Church, for when men have forgotten how to rejoice they will have forgotten how to pray."

Though in times past the publican may have made attempts to foist inferior or adulterated articles on his customers he is now so well supervised that any such action is almost impossible. He himself has to watch for the individual who is out to get a drink for nothing. One such rushed into a bar shouting, 'Give me a pint of beer before the row starts!' The pint was produced, and almost as quickly swallowed. 'Another!' was the next request and this was also forthcoming, but at the same time the landlord asked, "What's the row about and when s



his path, will reply, "Good evening, miss," as meekly as a lamb to the salutation of the girl behind the bar. Generally she is bright and cheerful—if not her stay is of short duration—and she is quite ready to indulge in a battle of chaff, provided it is kept within the bounds of what she considers lady-like and proper. In this respect she is all things to all men and will join issue with the septuagenarian gay old dog just as readily as with the good-looking man of thirty. Her job is to please and she generally does it well.

She has little use for the callow and immature youth who fancies himself as a gay dog. Two or three youngsters of this description had entered a West End bar and had failed to treat the lady behind the counter with that respect which was given by the regular customers. She looked at them for a moment or two in appraisement before enquiring, "Where have you little lot come from? Bit out o' place in a respectable house like this, aren't you? Officers of the Army perhaps; I don't think! Better take a bus and get back to Whitechapel and put those clothes back on the shelf before the boss finds out."

Many people have from time to time wondered how barmaids are recruited; after a long study of the subject, the writer suggests that the average barmaid is unmistakably a product of the Council school, though in some respects she rises above her class. She is amiable and even

tempered, with a quiet reserve of strength that enables her to handle equally well a difficult customer or a difficult situation. The source from which barmaids are drawn and their professional education has also been raised by Horace Wyndham in his *Nights of London*, from which we take the liberty of quoting "I often wonder," he writes, "where barmaids come from and just how they learn their business. Probably a training school exists for them somewhere, or perhaps they graduate at a Correspondence College. Their position is not enviable for they have long hours, laborious work and poor pay. Yet they are always good tempered and always eminently respectable. But this is a censorious world, and with the rest of us they have their detractors. Thus I once read in the annual report of the Society for the Suppression of Strong Drink that 'ten thousand British barmaids are confined every evening.' I fancy this is an exaggeration. Certainly the authorities of Queen Charlotte's Hospital seem to think so."

One is sometimes inclined to wonder why those engaged in one particular trade are by common report or tradition endowed with all the virtues, while those employed in another would appear to be the embodiment of vice. Why is it that the milkmaid is always extolled as the pattern of modesty and virtue while the barmaid usually figures in every story of questionable morality? Why should the peroxide blonde barmaid always

make an appearance as the vamp of the lower middle class world while the humble milkmaid is sought in honourable matrimony by the good looking son of the squire? Surely it cannot be that it arises from the standard of purity of the article in which they trade, for, judging from our comic papers, milk is an article which is much more subject to adulteration than beer

The average barmaid is not brilliant in her conversation and her repartee is largely confined to a constant use of the catch phrase of the day, a favourite for a long time being, "I don't think," which in many cases exactly described her state of mind. Any expression which can be freely used as conveying doubt or disagreement is sure of receiving a welcome from her, and she usually finds plenty of scope for its use, as, even stretching her imagination or her self appreciation to the full, she cannot believe half the stories told her or half the compliments paid her. Her powers of conversation not being very wide she supplements them with smiles, with the result that she does more smiling than talking. She is often given to a liberal use of scent, but has not yet discovered one that goes well with the aroma of beer. She likes the Navy and Army, especially the subaltern or callow variety, and she usually endows them with brevet rank.

Limited though her conversation may be, she has been known on occasions to get in some fairly useful rejoinders. One customer was well known

among the barmaids of a particular house for the fact that he never failed to make some complaint about every drink with which he was served, and thus he always visited on the head of the particular girl whose ill-luck it was to wait on him. Coming in one day he was no sooner served than he beckoned to the barmaid and began, "Look here, I have a very serious complaint to day . . ." "Indeed," said the girl with sweet sympathy, "then you will be glad to know that Charing Cross Hospital is the third street on the right."

"Hey, miss, hey!" shouted a rude and impatient customer. "Yes," said the girl sweetly, "but we shall have to send out for it." "Send out for what?" "The hay."

Lack of knowledge landed one poor girl in a difficult position. She was new to the game, and had not yet mastered all the terms of the trade. "Have you any Beaune?" asked a customer. "What d'ye think this is," was the reply, "a dog's kennel?"

A very pompous customer at the quick lunch bar ordered a couple of sausages, and added to his curt order the words "Well done." When presented to him they turned out to be rather underdone. "Did you hear me say well done?" he enquired of the barmaid. "Yes," was the quiet reply, "Thank you very much. It isn't often that we're appreciated."

"My dear," said a would be old gallant, "you serve me so sweetly that I would like to tip you,

but I believe that tips are forbidden in this establishment " "Oh yes," replied the girl readily, "but so were apples in the Garden of Eden "

Mr Arthur Porritt in his book *Best I Remember* tells a good story of a nonconformist divine who, looking out of a railway carriage window, got a scrap of cinder in his eye On reaching the terminus, his eye twitching with the pain, he went into the refreshment room and ordered a glass of milk Finding the flavour to be unfamiliar he asked the barmaid, "Was that milk?" "No, sir," was the reply, "it was rum and milk " "But what I asked for was milk " "Yes, I know, but you tipped me the wink so I made it rum and milk "

## CHAPTER XIV

### LOVE IN THE STREETS

*I looked yet again and a measure  
Of hope returned to me  
I saw and I took deep pleasure  
In a blossoming lilac tree  
And I saw two lovers sitting  
Side by side in the Park  
Then I saw the red moon filling  
Over the Thames in the dark,  
And I knew that even on London Town  
The stars and the beautiful moon smile down*  
GEORGE BARLOW

MAKING love is one of the principal interests in life of the young Londoner of either sex. If asked his or her favourite occupation the reply would probably be "Business and Sport" or "Sport and Business", but both of these take a secondary place to love-making, unless, as is perhaps probable, this is considered by both sexes to be a branch of sport.

The popularity of the recreation is undoubtedly due to its cheapness, its ease, and the fact that it can be indulged in earlier and later than any other sport. Skilfully carried out it should cost little, while it can be played from early teens until the time when white hair and

trembling limbs have placed the player on the shelf.

Search for a congenial companion of the opposite sex is generally known as "picking up", and London is undoubtedly the place where such a pastime can be enjoyed to the full. The attraction of the sport is never failing. To the boy or girl whose daily round is one of dull, drab, mechanical labour it offers just that spice of adventure that makes life worth while. For an hour or two each evening they can walk in a world of possibilities with the chance, at any moment, of meeting Princess Beautiful or Prince Charming. It is an opportunity for them to take a dip into the world's great lucky-bag, and, with the optimism of youth, they are certain that, in their case at least, there will be a prize.

Of course, from the ultra-respectable point of view this is all wrong, but the case for the defence has been ably put forward by a well-known authority on boy and girl life in our great cities. "The working girl," he writes, "merely knows that if she does not do well enough to satisfy the requirements of her employer a hundred other girls will be ready to take her place in the factory. As soon as the working hours are over she is ready to forget, as far as her weariness will permit, the drudgery of the day in the enjoyment of any fun which may come within her reach. It is only when

we realise the monotony of the workshop life that we can understand why the craving for excitement is almost a necessary element in the working girl's composition. As a child she was dependent on street incidents for most of her pleasures. Her very nature cries out for change and excitement. She loves crudities, for she has not been initiated into refined joys. Flirting is the main object of their intercourse.

The boys and girls see no serious meaning in love making, they are playing a game."

Picking up is a sport that, at any rate in the early years, must be carried out in couples, threes or fours, and it is indulged in directly the shackles of the elementary school are finally cast off. No sooner is work over and a hurried tea consumed than the youthful girl or boy sallies out with a boon companion in search of adventure. On the girl's side the proper attitude is one of aloofness and haughty contempt, while for the male sex it is one of disparaging criticism with just a soupçon of reckless bravado.

The area of romance, where the game of picking up is played, is generally somewhat limited. In every town and in various parts of London there are thoroughfares which by long custom have become more or less after sunset consecrated to Cupid. Here, in these oases of love, between two fairly well defined points, girls in pigtails and girls bobbed, shingled and Eton-cropped walk to and fro in couples or threes,



passing and repassing similar groups of youths. The girls mostly fight shy of stationary male groups as these are generally composed of misanthropic youths whose principal delight is in adverse and audible criticism. It is in the couples and the threes that possibilities lie.

There is apparently in each Love Lane, or Monkey's Parade as it is variously called, a local code of etiquette under no circumstances to be broken. Unless there has been a previous acquaintance it is not permissible for the male to address the female until there has been much passing and re passing. There must first be one or more audible comments made as the pairs pass or re pass, comments accompanied on the part of the girls by a haughty toss of the head, then comes a half smile of greeting and at the next passing a remark from one of the males on the condition of the weather. After which comes the invitation to walk together provided the parties are agreed on how they shall pair off.

How this pairing off process is accomplished has been graphically explained by F. M. Hueffer in his book on *The Soul of London*. "In externals," he writes, "one parade is like the other, but the small gradations are infinite. Thus in one parade there will be a great number of sets, each of the same social level, each set with its gossip, its chaff, its manner of accost, its etiquette, its language. You get, as it were, an impression of entering one vast family party

amid the rustle of feet, of dresses, the clatter clatter of canes, the subdued shrieks of laughter, the hushed personal remarks. As a rule in all these parades the youths, early in the evening, stand in knots, cloth caps not consorting with bowler hats and straw yards with neither. They talk with a certain ostentation and a certain affectation of swagger, boasting or acting in chorus in praise of one another. The girls parade up and down arm in arm. Heads steal round swiftly over shoulders as lines of girls pass knots of youths and at these electric moments the voices grow higher and little shoves and nudges pass like waves in a field of corn. There is not any psychical moment for pairing off but the process begins as the kindly dusk falls. A youth slips away from a knot, a girl hangs back from a line, till little by little the knots dwindle away altogether and there are no more lines."

The ceremonials of the actual greeting are astonishingly varied and are more rigidly observed than the etiquette of the one-time Court of Spain. In Love Lanes of the West End the youth from the office or behind the counter will raise his soft hat and drawl "How are you, Miss Ahcm?", further East the greeting resolves itself into a poke in the side from the male, followed by a slap on the back from the female, with "You are a one!" or "I never see such cheek before!"

As time goes on and the lady becomes more versed in the manners and customs of Love's Lane it sometimes happens that she ventures forth alone. Here the procedure is much the same, but with the advantage that the lady can show her preference by stopping and looking in some shop window and thus give the male hunter the opportunity of sidling up and giving her the unnecessary information that it is a fine evening. This being agreed he makes enquiry as to the whereabouts of her gentleman friend that evening, and when he learns of the non-existence of that gentleman the course is clear for a suggestion of a walk together.

In this game of catch-as-catch-can it is very essential that when the girl looks into a window the male should first be certain that there has been the preliminary half smile of invitation. One elderly old dude, with a great opinion of his own charms, sidled up to a girl who had turned away from the parade and was looking into a shop window. "Can I buy anything for you?" he asked. "Yes," said the girl, whose hopes were fixed on something younger, "I should like you to buy me a pair of crutches for my grandfather who is about your age and build."

Rigid adherence must be paid to certain rules in the game of picking up and woe be to the sinner who breaks them. The "passing the time of day", whatever its form, is not a sign that the

compact to join forces is sealed, it is only the opening of negotiations, and there must be a preliminary conversation during which the parties may sum up each other's merits or demerits and decide whether or not to extend their acquaintance. Should one of them be not desirous of so doing the information is conveyed in the polite lies "Well, I must be getting on home", or "I'll look out for you to-morrow night", after which both resume their sentry-go up and down the Parade. Further if either does not find their companion to come up to the requisite standard the acquaintance may be repudiated next evening and the kissing of the Saturday replaced by a chilly stare on the Sunday without either party feeling any sense of grievance.

Saturday is the great night in Love Lane, with Sunday coming in a very poor second. For some thirty-six hours there is freedom from the daily monotonous round of toil and it seems to go like wine to the head of the youthful Londoner. The girl's disdainful stare of Friday more often than not becomes one of invitation on the Saturday. Perhaps, too, it is a case of increased competition, or (base thought), it is the evening when the male bird is most flush, and therefore more likely to suggest a visit to the cinema. A short visit to any Love Lane on a Saturday evening will soon convince a sceptic that this is essentially Cupid's night, and that the streets

have on that evening a lure for youth that no park or open space can equal. The park, indeed, only serves as annexe to the parade, to which resort is made after the picking up is satisfactorily completed, and that only where funds do not permit of a visit to the cinema.

The game of picking up is also played on a smaller scale in the teashops, but here it lacks the opportunities given by the constant passing and repassing of the Lane. As a rule the girl is suspicious of the stranger who seats himself at her table and then ostentatiously hands her the salt or pepper, when she is eating a cream bun. Such direct action offends her sense of propriety, and any further advances may be met with the stereotyped dismissal, "I don't think I've been introduced to you."

Even when the contracting parties have "clicked" one of them may find later that the other does not exactly suit; then comes the somewhat difficult task of dissolving the partnership and trying elsewhere. As a rule this is effected with a certain amount of diplomacy as in the case of the young man who asked, "I expect you've been out with worse-looking fellows than I am, haven't you?" There was no reply. "I say," the query was repeated, "I expect you've been out with worse-looking fellows than I am, haven't you?" The girl, however, was of the opinion that she might have done better. "I heard you the

first time I was just trying to think," was her reply

A young man who had rather more than a good opinion of himself was anxious to impress his newly found lady acquaintance with the fact that his attentions should not be regarded too seriously, and that it was sufficient honour for her to be his chosen companion for the moment "I have made up my mind not to marry until I come across a girl who is my opposite in every way," he announced But by this time his companion had realised she was wasting her evening "Oh, that ought to be quite easy," came her tart reply, "there are no end of good looking, clever and well-mannered girls knocking about "

Another alliance was broken by the girl without any explanation The young man was of Scotch extraction and as they walked along the girl stopped for a moment to look into a sweet-stuff shop window "What are you going to have?" he enquired "Thank you," said the girl, "I'll take what you take yourself " "Oh," said Sandy, very much relieved, "then we'll both take a stroll "

Nor when acquaintanceship has advanced to the stage when he is permitted to take her arm, should the young man imagine all the prohibitions imposed upon him to be rigidly observed If he does he will sometimes find that he has to give place to a more adventurous rival "I won't go out with George again," complained one

young lady to a girl friend. "Why not?" queried the other. "Well," came the half-sobbing reply, "I made him promise not to kiss me if I walked out with him—and he kept his word."

Their acquaintanceship had so far developed that Ralph and Enid left the streets for the park where they sat down on a seat that, in Ralph's opinion, was far too public. He accordingly suggested a change to a corner that seemed to offer greater promise. "And will you promise not to hug me if I go there with you?" asked the demure young lady. "Yes," replied Ralph. "And you will promise not to kiss me?" "Yes," was the reply again. "Then what's the sense in going over there?" said the disconsolate girl.

Doris arrived home from her evening walk with her hair very much in disorder, a fact which mother was quick to notice. "Doris," she enquired, "just look at your hair! Has some young man been kissing you against your will?" "He thinks he did, mother," said the young lady with a smile of satisfaction.

A better knowledge of feminine nature belonged to the boy whose companion informed her girl friend (of course in the strictness confidence) that he had asked her for a kiss. "What cheek!" said her scandalised friend. "Oh," replied the fair one with the triumphant look of one who had won a great victory, "I just let him choose and he kissed both."

Where acquaintanceship has ripened into love the young man is sometimes far from eloquent on the subject of his affection, and very often the girl who is asking for sweet words has to angle for them. Few, however, have been as unsuccessful as the one who, imploring the bashful swain to say something nice, was asked by him after much thought, "Do you like treacle?"

Exacting too was the girl who suggested to her lover that he didn't really love her. "Why?" was the not unnatural query. "Because," (sniff) came the tearful reply, "When you are with me your chest doesn't go up and down like those men in the films."

Horace, in a somewhat laboured and round-about way, gave Ethel to understand that so far as he was concerned she was the one and only Ethel, however, hungered for more. "Do you really love me better than all the world, 'Orace?" she queried. "Corse I do, don't ask silly questions," came the convincing reply. "Do you love me better than your work?" "Rather." This very convincingly. "Better than the other girls?" "Yes." "Better than going to football matches?" But this was going a little too far. "'Ere, drop it," said Horace decisively, "that's the worst o' you girls, you want everything. 'Tain't any good trying to bind a man hand and foot."

On a miserable wet night a couple had taken shelter under one of the trees in the park.



"Oh, Jim," she said as she nestled up to him and gently squeezed his hand, "don't you remember it was on just such another night as this that you proposed to me?" "Yes," returned the practical Jim, whose thoughts were more on the damage that the rain was doing to his new summer suiting, "Rotten night, isn't it?"

He was very much in love, but very bashful, and the girl determined that it was quite time she gave him a helpful hint or two. The occasion was not long in arriving. That very evening they were taking a walk, when, with the courage of desperation, he ventured to put his arm round her waist. The girl made no comment. "Do you think I am making any progress?" he asked at length. "Well," came the meaning reply, "You're at least holding your own."

Lizzie was discontented because Alf's wooing was very much of the practical order. "Polly's bloke calls 'er 'is peach and the apple of his heye," she complained, "Why can't you call me things like that?" "Yes, that's all very well," grumbled the practical Alf, "but 'e's in the vegetable trade and my line's wheelks."

But when roused to speech the average Londoner of the poorer classes is often most emphatic in his declarations and sometimes his assertions as to the depths of his feelings are apt to verge on the ludicrous. "Do you love me, 'Erb?" asked one fair charmer. "Luv yer Liz?" was the reply, "I should think I does

Why if ever you gives me up I'll murder yer. I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

At times, too, the male becomes unduly demonstrative and will make love unblushingly in the midst of a crowd. On such occasions he is usually restrained by a somewhat sharp "Oh, do behave yourself," or "Give over now." Two young lovers on their evening stroll jumped on a bus already crowded and the conductor told them to go inside. "Shall we squeeze in here, dear?" said the young man. "Give over now and don't be silly," said the girl, wise from previous experience, "Can't you wait till we get in the Park?"

"Give me a kiss, old thing," pleaded an amorous youth. "No, I have scruples," said the girl who considered neither the time nor the place appropriate. "Never mind that," came the reply, "I've had 'em twice, and the measles as well."

A parade frequenter for whom watch has always to be kept is the male or female who believes in having more than one string to his or her bow. "Do you love me darling?" he asked. "Of course I do, Jack," she replied. "But my name is Jim," he expostulated. "Why, so it is," said the fickle fair one, "I keep thinking of Monday."

A little lady who had a somewhat extensive boy acquaintance was particularly fond of playing off one against the other. At length her

mother considered it necessary to make some observations on the matter. "Why do you always take two boy friends about with you?" she asked. "Well, mum," replied Miss June, "I find it very useful to carry a spare."

It is unwise for the lover of either sex to enquire too deeply into past history. Ethel admitted that she loved him truly, but with the selfishness of his sex Percy required even more. "Have you ever loved before?" he asked. "No, Percy," replied the candid girl in the best film style, "I've often admired men for their beauty, for their brains, for their strength or for their courage, but with you dear it is just love and nothing else."

marriage of a mutual friend "Wot ever did Bill get married for?" asked the first. "Carn't make it out," replied the second, "why he's keeping on working"

Mary had a small fortune of about £10 inherited from an uncle, and another girl had unkindly suggested that Jim had taken up with her for her money. "You wouldn't marry me for money, would you, Jim?" she asked plaintively "No blinkin' fear," replied the ready Jim, "I wouldn't marry you for all the money in the world"

Apparently, however, the mercenary individual sometimes succeeds in the search for a wife who will obviate the disagreeable necessity of having to go to work each day A little maid of all work had secured a lover among the frequenters of Love's Lane and proudly announced that she was going to be married "Have you made arrangements for your wedding, Mary?" asked her mistress "Well, I 'aven't done it yet, mum," was the reply "I've got to buy a trooso, get me future husbin' a job, buy him a new suit to get married in, get a little reglar washing to do at home, and then I can nime the 'appy day"

A bridegroom had twice failed to turn up at the appointed time at the registry office "Drat 'im," said the bride on the second occasion "'Tain't his trowsers this time 'cause I bought him a new pair"

There exists in Love's Lane a somewhat clearly defined gradation in the terms used to denote the various stages in Love's Pilgrimage. When walking out together has more or less regularly commenced the other party is described as "my lady (or gentleman) friend". At a later stage it advances to "my girl (or boy)", and concludes with "my fiancee". It is much to be regretted that no suitable English alternative to the latter term has yet been found, and though "Fiasco" has been suggested this should certainly never be used until after the honeymoon. It might, however, have been very appropriate in the following case. Charlie turned up one morning at work with a pronounced black eye. "Where did you get that one?" enquired a friend. "Oh," said Charlie, "Jack Jones is just back from his honeymoon and it was me that advised him to get married."

Much has been written about the danger of moonlight nights by the sea but even the streets are not without their peril and many a young man under the influence of a spring night has slipped into matrimony almost without knowing it. Then, in most cases, it happens that while man proposes woman makes him stick to it. "I hear George and you are engaged," said one girl to another. "Yes, we are," "Gracious," said the first one, "I never thought it was serious." "Nor did he," was the meaning reply.

A young man had been in constant attendance for quite a long period, but to the annoyance of the girl, who considered the time was fully ripe, he had made no definite declaration. Walking out as usual one evening he observed, 'I dreamt last night that I proposed to you. I wonder what that is a sign of?' Her reply was short and to the point. "I think it's a sign that you have more sense asleep than when you are awake."

Of similar determined mould was the girl who confided to her friend, "If ever Jim says 'wilt thou?' to me, I'm going to wilt."

The knowledge that he has allowed himself to be carried away by an impulse sometimes comes to the male only too quickly. "Will you marry me?" he asked. "Yes," was the prompt reply. After this there was a long silence broken at length by the lady asking, "Why don't you say something?" "There's been too much said already," was the sad reply.

Love's burning flame is rapidly kindled in the impressionable hearts of some of the frequenters of Love's Lane. They had met on the Tuesday, and on the following night there was a mutual confession that life without each other would be one great desolate unendurable wilderness. With Thursday night came the great blow. He was leaving London on the following morning for a job in the country that would last three weeks. The parting was long and painful, but in the end

she tore herself away and boarded a home-going bus. Just as it was on the point of moving off he rushed frantically after it, and, jumping on the footboard, gasped out, "Darling, you never gave me your name and address"

At the point when matrimony is looming on the horizon comes the time for mutual confidences. "I ought to tell yer," said Eliza, "that I'm what they calls a somnambulist." "Oh, don't you worry about that," was 'Erb's comforting reply, "I'm one of the Hearts of Oak meself, but wot I allers sez is you 'ave your religion and I'll 'ave mine."

Bert and Florrie were at the point of discussing where and how the honeymoon should be spent. "Let's go to Margate by boat," suggested Bert. "No, dear, that won't do, I'm always seasick," replied the girl. "Rubbish. Love is a good remedy for that." "Yes," said the young lady thoughtfully, "but what about the return journey?"

Love affairs and the possibility of them form among the lads and lassies of the streets a never-ending source of conversation. Two girls had been discussing their various boys and the type of man they would prefer to marry. "At any rate," said one at length, "I'll never marry a man who snores." "I quite agree," replied the other quietly, "but how are you going to find out?"

Alf and Mary decided to go to the altar together and the news having got abroad a friend

ventured to congratulate Alf on his luck "I hopes yer will be very 'appy," he said "Well, I don't see why we shouldn't," was Alf's reply "I came through the war without a scratch, you know "

Naturally when announcing the fact that she has secured a boy for keeps the young lady is often a little patronising towards her less fortunate sisters, but sometimes when this happens she gets rather more than she expected "Yes," said Doris, "I'm going to marry the sort of man I've been looking for all my life " "The same here," replied her bosom friend, "but you go ahead, darling—you've been looking much longer than I have "

Phyllis was hardly what could be described as in her first youth, and she was very proud when she secured what looked to be a permanent lover "I m very happy," she announced to her bosom friend, "I intend to keep my youth " "Yes," replied the other, "I've noticed you never introduce him to anyone "

"I wonder," said Elsie, "whether George will love me when I am old!" "I shouldn't worry over that," said her candid friend, "One consolation is that you'll jolly soon know "

When the loved one has had previous experience in the game of love then the comment of the dearest friend sometimes comes with an additional sting "I'm going to marry Bill," announced Gertie proudly "Yes," replied Susie,



"when I refused to have anything to do with him he said he didn't care what happened to him "

Mary had treated her circle of girl friends to a long account of how deeply Bertie loved her, "I didn't accept him the first time he proposed," she announced proudly "No, dear," replied one of her audience sweetly, "You weren't there at the time "

In other cases the comments aroused by her great news are scarcely of the kind that she desires "It's just wonderful," said Enid in announcing to one of her greatest friends that Dick had proposed to her "You can't imagine the thrill of sitting beside the man you love, it makes every little bit of you vibrate " "Oh yes I can, dear," replied her confidante, "I feel that every time Dick takes me out on his motor bike "

Following on this blissful period comes the time when the two principals have to leave this beautiful world that is all their own and parade for examination and approval before the respective families In most cases the man, if he considers anything more than a casual mention necessary, hurls his beloved one on the family almost as if she were a bomb, but in the girl's case there is usually some preliminary sounding as to how the news will be received "Did you sound your parents about our getting married?" he asked anxiously "Yes," she replied sadly, "and Dad sounded worst "

"Yes," said George pathetically, "we were going to get married but when we told her father it was all off" "Rough luck," said his friend, "Did he come between you?" "No," replied George with feeling, "He came behind me"

Sometimes it happens that in the course of this picking-up the young Lothario comes across a gold digger, and only when he comes to the end of his resources does he find that, so far from his love being returned, his adored one has no further use for him "I've done with women," said one young fellow who had been so bitten "When she found that I had spent all my money on her she absolutely turned me down" "Never mind, Bill," said his pal comfortingly, "perhaps it's for the best Don't forget there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it" "Yes," said Bill sadly, "but what's the good of that when you've lost all yer blinkin' bait?"

Having read thus far there are probably many who will say that the average London girl is not so black as she has been painted, to which one must agree, adding, in the words of *Punch*, "and not quite so pink either" After all, haphazard as many of these marriages that have their beginnings in the streets may be, it is surprising what a large proportion turn out well It would almost seem as if there was a special Providence to guard and guide these little more than children into the happy path of married content and domesticity. The subject has been nowhere

better treated than by Mr. H. V. Morton in his *Heart of London* where he writes, "And I thought how well worth writing of are the lovers of London, the ordinary little lovers whose sitting-out places are the parks, whose adventures are omnibus rides to Kew, whose extravagancies are tea and buns. They are happy, these little lovers of London; as all honest simple things are happy. No great winds of passion or ambition blow like storms in their hearts. They wish to escape from their surroundings into something which is their very own. They dream of the little house, just like every other little house in the row, and they dream of locking the front door on life and opening their arms to each other."

## CHAPTER XV

### CHILDREN OF THE STREETS

THE London street Arab was very much more in evidence not so many years ago than he is to-day, and at the time that Dickens wrote he was a fairly prolific contributor to the humour of our streets. At that time, and in a modified degree to-day, he was an outlaw with every man's hand against him and his own against every man's, especially those whose duty in life was the enforcement of law and order. To day, though times have changed, he cannot yet be overlooked, although a benevolent government pays so many people to overlook him.

Only when we dive from the main streets into the smaller ones that lie at the back do we come really into the kingdom of the children of the streets. There they still reign supreme, the common highway is their domain, and there, with the police at a distance, comes their opportunity for mischief and ridicule of sober age.

In many of his characteristics the street urchin only too plainly proves the child to be father to the man. In his street fights, for example, we find the characteristics of the grown up world reproduced to a point which almost reaches

caricature "Look 'ere," said Harry, aged thirteen, who was promoting a scrap "Afore my man fights he wants three glass marbles and a blood-alley and I wants a packet o' fags for meself" Or again the victor in a fight who, looking down on his vanquished opponent, said, "Now I suppose I got ter give yer first aid"

A combatant in another contest, an apparently very agile Jewish boy, remained firmly rooted to one spot as if glued there, giving his opponent every opportunity to romp in and deliver his blows almost as he pleased "'Ere, Ike," said one of his seconds at length, "Wot yer don' lettin' 'im 'it yer like that? Go after 'im can't yer?" "No bloomin' fear," came the reply from Ike, "I got my foot on the 'apenny"

It is inadvisable in these street fights or, in fact, in any street game, for a senior to give either advice or reproof The old gentleman stopped to try and settle a typical juvenile squabble "My boy," he said to one of the parties, "do you know what the Good Book says about fighting?" "Good lor, mister," came the patronising reply, "fighting ain't one of the things yer can get out of a book"

Another small boy had evidently had the worst of the encounter "What have you been doing? Fighting?" asked an inquisitive person somewhat needlessly "No, boohoo," came the sorrowful reply, "I bin fought"

These children again prove their similarity to

their elders in their dealings with the other sex, and among them alliances of a kind are contracted at an early age. "Well, Lizzy, and who's your little friend?" enquired a benevolent old lady of a small girl about seven years of age who was accompanied by a boy of somewhat the same mature age. "Little friend, Miss Smiff," was the reply, "Garn, that ain't no friend. That's my feller."

Pett Ridge used to tell a story of how a theatre was once booked by a philanthropic society to give an entertainment to some poor children. As the youngsters were marshalled in the boys were sent to the gallery while the girls were accommodated on the ground floor. "Wot," said one small six year old in disgust, "Ain't we going ter sit alongside of our tarts?"

This tendency to imitate the grown-up is also very clearly shown in the matter of language. "I shouldn't cry if I werè you, little man," said a kind old lady to a six year old boy who was weeping bitterly. "Must do somefing," came the emphatic reply, "I ain't old enough to swear."

An unforgivable sin among this class of the community is what is called "swank", and any show of it will soon bring forth some caustic criticism. "She don't 'arf swank since 'er father was knocked down by a Rolls Royce," complained one young lady of another.

"Wot's 'e follerin' the copper for?" asked one boy of another, pointing to a third who was

trailing along in the rear of a policeman. "Oh, that's only his bloomin' side," answered No. 2, "'E wants people ter think he's bin pinched."

The conversation of these children often throws light on the conditions of their home life. "What's the matter with your head?" asked the kindly old gentleman of the small boy whose head was bound up. "Farver," was the laconic reply. "Where is your father?" "'Orspital." "What, an accident?" "No, muvver."

A clergyman was making visits in a very poor part of his parish when he came across a small boy whom he recognised as a member of his Boys' Club. "Well, George," he enquired, "is your father in work?" "Yus," came the reply. "How long has he been in work?" "Two munce." "Indeed, that's very satisfactory. What's he doing?" "Three munce."

A breathless urchin ran up to a policeman and said, "You're wanted dahn our street and bring an amberlance." "What d'you want an ambulance for?" asked the representative of law and order. "Oh," was the reply, "muvver's found the lidy wot pinched our doormat."

A slum curate making his calls observed to a small boy, "Hello, Billy, I see your window is broken. How did that happen?" "It was muvver wot broke it," was the youngster's reply, "but it was farver's fault—he ducked."

We get a refreshing change from marital warfare in the story of the little girl who, being lost

in the streets, was taken by a friendly policeman to the police station. There all attempts to find out where she lived or anything beyond her Christian name were in vain. At last someone asked, "Tell me, what name does your mother call your father?" "Why," said the little one in surprised tones, "she doesn't call him any names. She likes him."

The London child owing, perhaps, to the arduous daily struggle for a mere existence which he sees always around him is essentially practical and direct, so much so as to amount to almost rudeness to those who do not understand him. A gentleman standing on the kerbstone of an East End street was watching a funeral go past. At length he turned to a small boy standing near and asked, "Who's dead, sonny?" "Why, the bloke wot's in the coffin," was the convincing answer.

A customer tendered a sixpence to a newspaper boy, the boy at once bit the coin. "Why are you biting the sixpence?" asked the customer. "To make sure it's a good one, guv'nor." "But don't you know that money swarms with microbes? Aren't you afraid of getting some fearful disease in the mouth?" Not 'arf so much as I am of getting a bad tanner, guv'nor," came the practical reply.

A well meaning lady endeavoured to instil into some Whitechapel boys a few elements of courtesy. "Why does a gentleman walking with



a lady always take the outside of the path?" she asked. "So that he can look for cigarette ends," came the ready response.

A youngster had applied to a fishmonger for a job as errand boy. "Do you know any arithmetic?" he was asked. "Rather," was the confident reply. "Well," said the employer, "What would twenty pounds of salmon be at threepence a pound?" "Bad," came the reply without a moment's hesitation.

A stout old gentleman's hat had blown off and calling to a small boy who was pushing a barrow slowly along he shouted, "Hi, boy, just run after my hat, will you?" "Oh yes," came the suspicious reply, "and you runs off wiv my barrer. I don't fink."

A born rebel against law and order there is more or less continual warfare waged between the boy of the street and the policeman. "Garn," said one of these infants to a very thin policeman who had ordered him to "get away home." "Ain't yer got a cook on yer beat?" Or again the policeman who was pushing back the crowd at a fire. "Get back there, can't you?" said the representative of the law. "Who are you a-pushing of?" retorted one small boy, "I've got shares in the company. Can't I see my own place burn?"

The sentry is sometimes a butt for the street urchin's wit and, unlike the policeman, he is handicapped by the fact of being unable to

follow and chastise the offending youngster. Two small boys had amused themselves for some time by gazing at one of the mounted sentries in Whitehall and making various uncomplimentary remarks on his appearance. "Here, what are you looking at?" said the indignant soldier at length. "Well, can't we look at yer?" replied one of the boys, "we pays for yer."

Another sentry, tired at the continuous and critical stare, suggested to the boy behind it that he should move off. "That's more than you can do, guv'nor," came the quick reply.

The tendency to imitate his elders as shown in the matter of smoking is also responsible for many good stories. A youngster was making his way down the street proudly puffing at the stump of a cigar that he had retrieved from the gutter. An old lady viewed this example of juvenile depravity with grave concern. "Don't you know it's very wrong and harmful for little boys to smoke tobacco?" she said. "Garn," came the disgusted reply, "Who yer calling a little boy? And besides this ain't terbakker at all, it's a cigar."

Two small boys were out in search of adventure and one of them picked up the stump of a cigar which he at once lit and then commenced to puff with evident enjoyment. "When can I have a puff?" said No. 2 after a time. "Oh,

you shut up," said the lordly owner, "I'm the chairman of this company; you're only a shareholder. You can spit."

Another small boy once called at a general shop and demanded "a packet o' fags". In view of his age the proprietor declined to serve him. "As I've told you before," he said, "until you reach the legal age I don't dare supply you. Besides, a kid of your age wants nothing with smoking." At this the boy turned to the door but on reaching there turned and said, "Got any broken biscuits, guvnor?" "Yes," said the proprietor, "Lots." "Then mend 'em," suggested the youngster as he faded away into the night.

A gentleman going down a London street was followed closely by two small boys who were enviously watching a fine cigar that he was smoking. At length, considering that he had smoked it long enough, there came a cry of "Throw us the butt, sir". The smoker took no notice of the request. "Let him alone," said one of the youngsters at last in disgust, "Can't you see it's a butt he has picked up himself?"

This class of boy is essentially business-like and takes good care to get good value for his occasional pennies. "How many of these sweets do I get for a penny?" said a small boy in a grocer's shop. "Six or seven," said the grocer. "Very well," replied the youngster, "I'll have seven."

"Pennorth o' grapes," demanded one small boy entering a fruiterer's shop. "We don't sell pennyworths of grapes," said the scandalised shopkeeper. "Oh, don't you; then give me a pennorth o' carrots. I'm a devil for fruit."

An elderly and somewhat corpulent gentleman proceeding down a quiet road, after a heavy snowfall, observed a small boy standing beside a heap of ready made snowballs. Fearing that the boy might have hostile intentions the old gentleman thought it would perhaps be advisable to adopt a friendly attitude, and accordingly asked, "What are all those snowballs for, my boy?" "They're for sale, guv'nor," was the reply. "For sale, that seems a little strange. What's the price?" "Sixpence, guv'nor, but if you don't like to pay that you can 'ave 'em for nuffink." The old gentleman paid.

offended Two typical London boys had jumped on the footboard of a bus while the conductor was upstairs taking tickets They hung on for about a quarter of a mile until they noticed he was about to descend At this point one of them said, "Do we get off here, Joe?" "Yes," replied the other, and calmly stepping forward he rang the bell for the bus to stop

A bald headed gentleman was making his way along an East End street when his hat blew off and went merrily sailing down the road It was, however, retrieved by a youngster who, taking a glance at the bald pate, handed it back with the remark, "'Ere y'are, guvnor 'At pins ain't no use ter you, I bet"

The small boy had rapped out an expression not usually used in polite society "It was very wrong of you to use such a wicked word," said an old lady who was passing "I suppose you know what kind of little boys go to Heaven" "Yes," replied the unrepentant sinner, "dead 'uns"

A small boy after a long run had procured a taxi for the dear old dowager, and handing him a penny she said, "Here's a penny, what will you do with it?" "What" replied the unabashed youngster, "all that at once? I'll tell you wot I'll do with it, mum, I'll toss yer, double or quits"

The small boy was gazing longingly at the entrancing pictures outside the cinema, when a

lady came along and stopped for a moment as if with the intention of going inside. "Pay for us to go in, lydy," pleaded the youngster sidling up to her. "Certainly not," was the indignant answer. "Then tike us in yer arms," suggested the undefeated one.

The London street boy generally takes a refusal of his request or assistance with equanimity but there are occasions when his retort is apt to be far from courteous. Few, however, were so direct as the boy outside Euston station who pestered a Scotch traveller with offers to carry his bag. "Carry your bag, sir," said the boy for the umpteenth time. "No," said the traveller decisively. "Then I 'ope it strains yer," said the boy as he faded away down a side street.

Even when there is every intention of being polite the common language of the streets will at times come out and the result is scarcely what was intended. In this connection Pett Ridge has a story of how, when once standing outside the Great Portland Street station he required a cab, and a small boy volunteered to fetch one. He was successful in his mission and came back with the vehicle, holding by the handle, when a bigger boy tried to intervene. "Go away," said the small boy indignantly. "Go away, carn't yer? I was the one that was asked to get the taxi for the silly old swine." Then, with a touch of his cap, he added, "Wasn't I sir?"

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With all his faults, and they are many, the average child of the streets has a great sense of personal dignity and woe be to the person who trespasses upon it. A somewhat long-haired artist was accosted by a dirty little bootblack with the cry, "Shine your shoes, sir?" Disgusted at the filthiness of the lad's face the artist said, "I don't want my shoes shined but I'll give you sixpence if you go and wash your face." "Righto guvnor," was the reply, and the lad quickly made his way to a neighbouring fountain. On his return, looking much cleaner, the artist held out the coin. "I don't want yer blinkin' sixpence," said the boy with aristocratic haughtiness, "You 'ang on to it and go and get yer 'air cut."

There are occasions when the dignity of the boy is somewhat rudely upset by contact with someone who is able to give him a *quid pro quo* in his own particular brand of Cockney impudence. One such young gentleman had just been taken on by a big stores in the capacity of van boy and full of his new-found importance he knocked and rang at the tradesman's door with all the importance of a director or a sergeant-major. No answer being at once forthcoming he knocked and rang again, and then, to relieve the tedium of waiting, commenced to whistle in a shrill key the latest music-hall ditty. At this moment the door opened and the face of a vinegary-looking housemaid appeared. | "Well," she snapped.

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place?" said his prospective employer. "Well, you seem all right, but you're a very little chap."

"Yes, sir," was the reply, "I am little, but I'm all there."

"I want a strong boy," said one employer. "Do you consider you are strong?" "I've licked all the other fellows who are waiting downstairs," was the convincing reply.

A boy was an applicant for a post as junior clerk and messenger. "Ever taken a prize at school?" he was asked. "Yes, sir, three." "Splendid; run home and get them. I should like to see them." "I can't do that, sir. They saw me take them so I had to put 'em back."

The humour of our streets is sometimes swelled by the little one who is making acquaintance with the crowds and wonders of a great city for the first time. "That's the Home Office," said a fond father pointing out the building to his small son. "The Home Office," repeated the child, "I suppose that's where they sell houses?"

Little Mary had been brought to town for the day and it was her first experience of a passenger lift. "Wasn't it funny?" she said as she came out, "We went into a little house and then the upstairs came down."

The same little girl was taken into a restaurant and at the conclusion of the meal her mother suggested that she should say grace. "But," protested the child, "we're paying for this, aren't we?"

## CHAPTER XVI

### ODDITIES AND WHIMSICALITIES

LONDON, essentially a city of contrasts, approximates in this respect to the Marriage Service of the Church of England Prayer Book, which, as a cynic once pointed out, commences with "Dearly beloved" and ends "in amazement" It is the pulse of a great confederation of nations giving allegiance to one flag, and yet it is the harbour of refuge and the domicile of every nation under the sun It is patriotic to the core, to the front in every movement that makes for England for the English, and yet, if we take up the London Post Office Directory, we shall find that it commences with the somewhat un-English name of a Ababrelton and concludes with that of Zygouras, while the Telephone Directory comes to a conclusion with an interesting string of Zweig, Zweigenbaum, Zwemmer, Zwick, Zwicker, Zwinger, Zwink, Zwirn, Zygad, Zygouras, Zylpha, Zyrot, Zyutt and Zyva.

It is interesting to note how many names of great personages are still perpetuated among the inhabitants of London We find no less than three Oliver Cromwells in the Telephone Directory, though unfortunately as none of

these gentlemen give their occupation it is impossible to say whether one of them is a brewer John Milton also appears twice, once as a builder in Maida Vale, and once as the proprietor of a Food Stores in the Chiswick area, while two others to some extent conceal their identity with the great poet by simply appearing as J Milton Of four W Shakespeares only one, a barrister, boldly announces himself as William, but of the other three one, at least, who keeps a public house in the Bow Road, with the quaint title of the *Bombay Grab*, also rejoices in the name of William John Knox, the man of iron, is suitably represented by John Knox and Dyke, Engineer Contractors while William Pitt is aptly enough the name of a builder An empire builder in the person of Warren Hastings appears in Kensington, the Duke of Wellington under his family name of Arthur Wellesley has a turf commission agent as namesake, while Charles Chaplin seems to have deserted the studios of Hollywood and settled appropriately enough in Brixton The name of John Bull, whose famous preaching on the text 'When Adam delved and Eve span who was then the gentleman' once moved England's peasantry to revolt, to day belongs to a cartage contractor, Robert Peel, to whom we are indebted for our present dry police force, is with us still as R K C, the West End furnishes W G Grace, John Gower, the poet and friend of Chaucer, now retards milk

and other dairy produce in the neighbourhood of Palmer's Green, while the inimitable Sam Weller appears no less than three times, in one case living appropriately enough at a house called *Pickwickians*

Joseph Addison, the poet, essayist and statesman, is now represented by a hotel keeper, Francis Bacon can be called up in Ealing, George Washington sells fancy goods in the East End, Robert Bruce makes no less than four appearances, while William Wallace may be found as a Baker and Confectioner, Thomas Hobson, the famous originator of the saying Hobson's Choice, still exists, and Isaac Walton can be found in Hampstead and also is the style of a well known clothing firm, John Churchill makes three appearances, one of them as a publisher, while that well known early democratic leader Jack Cade is represented by a firm of East End coal merchants trading as J Cade and Co

Mr C W Hickethorn in his interesting book of *London Memories* points out that a little known, but very interesting and often humorous feature of London, is found in the vanes or weathercocks still to be seen. In the olden days these usually took the form of a cock, this being considered an emblem of vigilance, and at one time a Papal enactment ordered the figure of this bird to be set on every church steeple as the cognizance of St Peter. At the

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same period it was also the practice to place such vanes on the masts of ships to denote the direction of the wind. To day these symbols scarcely exist outside churches, but Billingsgate market is still surmounted by one in the shape of a dolphin, and Leadenhall has a pheasant, both with the object of showing the trade carried on, though it is more than probable that, in the first named case, if a Billingsgate fishmonger was asked for a dolphin his reply might be couched in typical Billingsgatese. The Royal Exchange is dominated by a grasshopper, not intended to represent the jumpiness of the people beneath its roof but in reproduction of the crest of the founder, Sir Thomas Gresham.

In most cases vanes appearing on churches have some connection with the patron saint of the church. Thus that on the church of St Clement's is perforated with an anchor, this being symbolical of that saint who met his death by being thrown into the sea tied to such an article. St Edmund's in Lombard Street and St Stephen's in Coleman Street both carry arrows in memory of saints who were slain in that manner. At St Lawrence in the Jewry the vane takes the form of a gridiron, in recollection of the fact that this particular saint was broiled to death on one. A somewhat gruesome story tells that St Lawrence at one point of his martyrdom asked the executioner to turn him round as he was already nearly

browned on one side. Other vanes worthy of notice are those on St Mildred's, Bread Street, which bears the monogram M and B, one in the form of a ship on St Michael's Church, Queenhithe, reminiscent of the days when this was a sea-faring locality, the crown on St Martin's in-the-Fields, and said to be so placed to denote that the King resides within the parish, and the dragon on St Mary le-Bow, for which no reason has yet been found and which, it is hoped, has no reference to the lady after whom the church is named.

The City of London has a somewhat unique distinction in that it possesses more parishes than churches, there being 109 of the former and only 45 of the latter. The number of churches has shown a decrease rather than an increase, since, as against the 45 now existing, there were, according to Fitzstephen when he wrote his description of London at the end of the twelfth century, some 126 parish churches in addition to several monastic establishments. Of these parishes perhaps the most unique is that of St Christopher le-Stocks, which occupies a part only of one building, the Bank of England. Not only does the Bank contain a parish within itself but it also forms part of that of St Margaret Lothbury and St Bartholomew-by the Exchange. The parish church of St Christopher was pulled down by the direction of the bank authorities lest during any time

of riots its tower might be used as a point of attack against their building.

The honour of being the smallest parish in the City is held by St. Mary Mounthaw, which lies at the corner of Queen Victoria and Friday Streets, and consists of only six houses. It has had no church since the Great Fire of 1666, and at one time was very much larger, but was brought to its present emaciated state by the destruction of a number of small lanes and alleys when Queen Victoria Street was improved in 1854.

London parishes in times past have had a fondness for adopting the patronage of St. Mary, with the result that for purposes of identification a surname has had to be added, this being usually that of the locality or the name of some former benefactor. Thus we find within "the one square mile" the names of St. Mary-le-Bow, St. Mary Mounthaw, St. Mary Woolnoth, St. Mary Aldermay, St. Mary Magdalene, Mill Street, St. Mary Somerset, St. Mary-at-Hill, St. Mary Bothaw, St. Mary Magdalene, Old Fish Street Hill, St. Mary Staining, St. Mary Abchurch, St. Mary Woolchurch and St. Mary Colechurch.

London's statues have already been briefly referred to in an earlier part of this book, but they are of quite sufficient importance to warrant a few further remarks. "It is the custom", writes Mr. C. G. Harper in *More Queer Things*

bad lads of the village, and that as regards his debts he was no better at settling up than he was at settling down. It was this last trait that prompted the remark of Leigh Hunt who, recollecting the tradesmen of Regent Street and the West End as the Duke's unfortunate creditors, said, "Ah! there he stands as usual—with his back to his creditors." The Duke's only claim to fame would seem to be that he was the hero of the verse which describes how he marched ten thousand men up the hill and then marched them down again, with the result that when they were halfway up they were neither up nor down. The statue was largely erected by the compulsory contribution of one day's pay by every soldier in the army, and this at a time when the pay of Tommy Atkins was utterly inadequate to supply him with even the necessary food.

Evidently with the idea of levelling up matters as far as possible London contains statues to both King Charles I and Oliver Cromwell, and, in possible furtherance of this idea, that of the king is placed on the very spot where eleven of his judges had suffered the extreme penalty. Cromwell, who insulted Parliament more than even the most despotic of monarchs would have dared to do, finds a place outside Westminster Hall where he can look on to Parliament Square and encourage irresponsible members of the present day to follow his example and carry away "that bridle."

Another statue inexplicably erected is that of James II behind the Admiralty. If historians are to be believed, and on this point they appear for once to be unanimous, James, as a king, was a pretty complete failure, not only did he lose his job but he had to hop off like a defaulting slate club secretary. It is, also, difficult to understand why he should have been depicted as a Roman Emperor, a course also followed in the statue of George IV equally without justification.

Many of the London statues suggest that clothing has presented problems to the sculptors. In the statue of Brunel on the Victoria Embankment, the frock coat and trousers worn by that eminent engineer are such as would have brought a blush of shame to the cheek of any self-respecting clerk compelled to wear them. In the statue to George III in Cockspur Street that monarch is represented as holding his hat in his hand as if it was too small or too hot for him, while in the one to the Prince Consort in Holborn Circus the Prince is shown while in uniform, raising his cocked hat in salute, an action of which even a one day old subaltern would not be guilty.

This inability to see things in true perspective seems at one time to have possessed those responsible for that great national possession Westminster Abbey. Here are to be found huge memorials to people whose very names would otherwise have long been forgotten the removal of which would not only add to the beauty of the

ancient edifice but would give a large amount of much needed seating room. The visitor to the Abbey, the great national mausoleum, will find some difficulty in repressing a cynical smile when amidst the modest memorials to some of the greatest of the land he finds a tomb to the memory of a 'gentleman aged 7 years and 9 months', or notices that the memorial to the widow of a one time Bishop of Bangor occupies five times as much space as that of Richard Cobden and Warren Hastings put together.

Mention of statues prompts the recollection of other memorials, and to those interested in the subject a visit to the various London churches will amply prove that the characteristic humour of the Londoner, so fruitful in life, would appear also to follow him to the grave. A good example of this somewhat morbid humour is to be found in the church of St Benet s, Paul s Wharf, where the stone of a Mr More announces as follows

Here lies one More and no More than he  
 One More and no More how can that be?  
 Why one More and no More may well lie here alone  
 But here lies one More and that More than one

Similar lines occur in an inscription in Hackney Church on Peter Stiller

' As still as death poor Peter lies  
 And Stiller when alive was he  
 Still not without a hope to rise  
 Though Stiller then he still will be

Somewhat more brief, and certainly more eulogistic, is an epitaph in the Temple Church to the memory of a Mr John White It reads

"Here lies John, a burning shining light,  
Whose name, life actions, all alike were white "

But if brevity is the soul of wit that is capped, not in a church, but at Kensal Green Cemetery, where the grave of Wm Quick simply records,  
"Here lie the Quick and the dead "

Many of these old time memorials are highly eulogistic, and couched in terms that make the modern man wonder whether, in spite of our modern civilisation, we are not in some ways more degenerate The inscription in St Margaret's, Westminster, on the tomb of Admiral Blake who died in 1657, reads

'Here lies a man made Spain and Holland shake,  
Made France to tremble and the Turks to quake,  
Thus he tam'd men but if a lady stood  
In's sight, it rais'd a palsy in his blood  
Cupid's antagonist who in his life  
Had fortune as familiar as a wife  
A stiff hard soldier, for he  
It seems had more of Mars than Mercury,  
At sea he thunder'd calm'd each rising wave  
And now he's dead sent thundering to the grave '

At the present time historians are in some doubt as to whether the slaying of Wat Tyler by

Sir William Walworth, who died in 1383, was an act of treachery or that of a justly incensed and loyal subject; the inscription in St. Saviour's, Southwark, would appear to leave no doubt on the matter. The manner in which the poet has obtained his rhyme in the last line is noteworthy as particularly ingenious:

"Here under lyeth a man of Fame,  
 William Walworth, called by name.  
 Fishmonger he was in Lyff time here,  
 And twice Lord Maior, as in Books appere;  
 Who with courage stout and manly Myght,  
 Slew Wat Tyler in Kyng Richard's Syght.  
 For which act done and trew Entent,  
 The Kyng made hym Knight incontinent.  
 And gave hym Armes as here you see,  
 To declare his Fact and Chivalrie.  
 He left this lyffe the yere of our God  
 Thirteen hundred, fourscore and three od."

A tomb in St. Michael's Church, Crooked Lane, to the memory of John Lovekin is also of the same type, and also perpetuates the memory of a Lord Mayor and a Fishmonger. The inscription runs as follows:

"Worthy John Lovekin, stock fishmonger of London,  
 here is lay'd,  
 Four times of this city Lord Maior he was, if truth  
 be sayd.  
 Twise he was by election of citizens then being,  
 And twice by the commandment of his good lord the  
 King.



Chief founder of this church in his lifetime was he,  
Such lovers of the commonwealth too few there be  
Of August the fourth thirteene hundredyth sixty and  
eighth,  
His flesh to erth, his soul to God went streight "

In the same church we have an even more glowing eulogy on a very humble individual, Robert Preston, Drawer at the famous Boar's Head Tavern in Great Eastcheap, who died in 1730 It would almost seem as if the epitaph had been written by an ardent temperance reformer.

"Bacchus, to give the toping world surprise,  
Produc'd one sober son, and here he lies,  
Tho' nursed among full hogshead he defy'd  
The charm of wine, and every vice besides  
O Reader! if to justice thou'rt inclined,  
Keep honest Preston daily in thy mind,  
He drew good wine took care to fill his pots,  
Had sundry virtues that outweigh'd his fau'ts  
You that on Bacchus have the like dependance,  
Pray copy Bob in measure and attendance "

There is a tomb in St Saviour's, Southwark, to the memory of Jarret, a grocer, who died in 1626 The inscription is worthy of notice both for its confident assertion as to the destination of Mr Jarret and the statement in the last line which, in the opinion of many, will be open to question

"Some called him Garret, but that was too high,  
 His name was Jarret, that here doth lye;  
 Who in his life was tost on many a wave,  
 And now he lies anchor'd in his own grave.  
 The Church he did frequent while he had breath,  
 He desir'd to lye therein after his death.  
 To Heaven he has gone the way before,  
 Where of Grocers there are many more."

The writer of an epitaph on an attorney buried in St. Pancras Church evidently had doubts on the general honesty of the profession; certainly, in his opinion, they fell short of the exemplar of the grocers:

"Here lies one, believe it if you can,  
 Who tho' an attorney was an honest man;  
 The gates of Heav'n for him will open wide,  
 But will be shut 'gainst all the tribe beside."

The inscription on the tomb of Sir Francis Vere in Westminster Abbey is very much of the flamboyant order:

"When Vere fought Death armed with his Sword and  
 Shield,  
 Death was afraid to meet him in the Field;  
 But when his Weapons he had laid aside,  
 Death, like a Coward, struck him, and he dièd."

Like the grocer mentioned above John and Agnes Den, who were buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster, seem to have been sure of their ultimate destination:

Conspicuous among modest epitaphs is one from St. Dunstan's, Stepney:

"Here lies the body of Daniel Saul  
Spitalfield's Weaver, and that's all."

Another in St. Michael's, Crooked Lane, reads:

"Here lyteth wrapt in clay  
The body of William Wray;  
I have no more to say."

Almost equally laconic is that in St. Pancras' Church on Woollett, an engraver:

"Here Woolett rests, expecting to be saved,  
He graved well, but is now well engraved."

A brief but sufficiently descriptive epitaph is in St. Dunstan's, Stepney, to the memory of William Wheatly, who died in 1683.

"Whoever treadeth on this stone,  
I pray you tread most neatly,  
For underneath the same doth lie,  
Your honest friend Will Wheatly."

Jean Anderson of Hammersmith undoubtedly held the opinion that eulogies on tombstones are not always evidence of character. His stone, dated 1770, bears the inscription:

"Praises on tombs are vainly spent,  
A good name is a monument."

An appropriate monument is to be found in St. Martin's Churchyard, St. Pancras, where Charles Dibden, the composer of *Tom Bowling*, lies His epitaph consists of the following verse of his famous song:

"His form was of the manliest beauty,  
His heart was kind and soft;  
Faithful on earth he did his duty,  
But now he's gone aloft."

A form of epitaph which at one time obtained a certain amount of popularity was the one in the form of an acrostic, the first word of each line of verse beginning with a letter of the deceased person's name Good examples of this are to be found in the memorials to Sir Francis Walsingham in St Paul's, and to Captain Valentine Pyne, Master Gunner of England, in the Tower Church

Among other quaint memorials to be found in London are the following —

In St. Olave's, Hart Street ·

"In God is my whole trust I O 1591  
John Orogen and Helen his wife  
What I was so be ye, as I am you shall be  
What I gave, that I have,  
What I spent, that I had,  
Thus I count all my cost,  
That I left, that I lost "

In St. Alban's, Wood Street:

"Hic jacet Tom Shorthose,  
Fine Tombe, fine Sheets, fine Riches,  
Qui vixit fine Gowne, fine Cloake,  
Fine Shirt, fine Breeches."

At Ealing:

"Here lies the body of John Day,  
Shut up in this cold house of clay,  
As he was passing by a dray,  
God thought fit to call him away,  
To join the heavenly harmonay."

And last, but in no respect least, that of Thomas Parr in Westminster Abbey, who died in 1635, at the age of 152 years, having lived in the reigns of ten monarchs, *viz.*, Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, James I and Charles I.

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